

EXEGESIS AS POLEMICAL DISCOURSE

Ibn Ḥazm on Jewish and
Christian Scriptures

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CHAPTER I

Ibn Ḥazm's Life and Work

In the history of relations among Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, the interreligious encounter in medieval Spain stands out as particularly noteworthy for its intensity and creativity. There, for nearly eight centuries, Muslims, Christians, and Jews interacted both cooperatively and confrontationally in a "relational triangle" that was both self- and other-defining.

One consequence of this interaction was the generation of interreligious polemic texts reflecting the universal claims of each of the three competing monotheistic faiths. This study focuses on one such text written by one of the foremost scholars of Islamic Spain, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sa'id ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī, who was born ca. 994 and died in 1064.

The breadth of the contribution made by Ibn Ḥazm to Arabic-Islamic culture is indicated by the multiplicity of designations his biographers use to describe him: historian, poet, littérateur, jurisconsult, theologian, moralist, logician, political thinker, psychologist, metaphysician, exegete, and polemicist. So wide-ranging was his intellectual activity that he managed to devote scholarly attention to all the branches of Greek and Islamic learning, with the exception of mathematics (Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:5).

We shall focus on the last two of the designations listed above, i.e., on Ibn Ḥazm as exegete and polemicist, and examine how he uses exegesis as part of his polemic against Jews and Christians.

Though Ibn Ḥazm was heir to the rich cultural heritage that had developed during three centuries of Muslim hegemony in al-Andalus, he was also a victim of the societal chaos that beset his homeland in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. The events of his day jolted him from a privileged and sheltered childhood and confronted him with the harsh realities of political and military conflict. The centrifugal forces at work in al-Andalus during Ibn Ḥazm's lifetime could in large part be attributed to the ever-expanding influence of a specific element in Andalusian society: the Berbers. The disruption they caused had a negative impact on Ibn Ḥazm's physical security, emotional equanimity, and political fortunes.

A. Ibn Ḥazm's Early Years: Umayyad Decline and Berber Ascendancy

Ibn Ḥazm witnessed the initial pangs of the disintegration of Muslim civilization in Spain. Umayyad domination in al-Andalus, which had its inception in 756 when 'Abd al-Rahmān I established an independent emirate in Córdoba, came to suffer a gradual decline that led to its extinction in 1031. Meanwhile, back in the Islamic heartland, the Abbasid dynasty had displaced the Umayyads, having overthrown them in 750. The Umayyad rulers of Spain recognized the authority of the Abbasid dynasty of Baghdad until 'Abd al-Rahmān III "saw the state of weakness and abjectness to which the [Abbasid] khalifate had been reduced" (al-Maqqarī, *Naṣṣ al-ṭib* [The Spread of Goodness], vi; trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:147). In 929 he asserted his independence, proclaiming himself caliph of Qurtubah (Córdoba) and taking the *laqab* "al-Nāṣir" ("the Defender"). When he died in October 961, his son Ḥakam II al-Mustanṣir succeeded him, reigning for approximately fifteen years. At the time of his death on 29 September 976, his son and successor Hishām II al-Mu'ayyad was only nine years of age and therefore incapable of assuming rule. One of the generals of his grandfather's army, Abū 'Amir al-Mu'āfirī, better known as al-Manṣūr ("the Victorious"), took advantage of the power vacuum to begin a dynasty of his own, the Amirids, who were heavily dependent on the support of Berbers whom he imported to serve in his army (Chejne 1974, 41). This massive Berber influx upset the delicate ethnic balance of Andalusian society (Wasserstein 1985, 45) and contributed to the ultimate collapse of Umayyad hegemony.

According to the *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* (Categories of Nations) of Sa'id al-Andalusī (d. 1070), Ibn Ḥazm's ancestors¹ "came originally from the village of Mont Lisham² in the ... province of Lablat [Niebla] of the western parts of al-Andalus," and thus emigrated to Córdoba, where his father Aḥmad quickly rose to prominence in the Umayyad court (chap. 13; trans. Salem/Kumar 1991, 70). He set up his house in the eastern quarter of Córdoba, not far from the palace. It was in such favorable circumstances that Ibn Ḥazm was born in the early morning of 30 Ramadan 384 A.H. [7 November 994], according to Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282) in his *Kitāb wafayāt al-a'yān* (Deaths of Eminent Men) (trans. de Slane 1863, 2:267).

Ibn Ḥazm himself claims to give us a glimpse of his childhood experiences in the *Tawq al-ḥamāma* (The Dove's Necklace; hereafter *Tawq*). He claims that in his early years he was secluded in the harem, surrounded by women, to whom his early education was entrusted:

I have watched women and learned about their secrets, things that someone else could hardly ever get to know, because I was brought up in their laps and grew up in their presence and I did not know anyone except them, nor did I associate with men until I was on the threshold of adolescence when beard began to grow on my face. They have taught me the Qur'ān and recited much poetry to me, and trained me in calligraphy (trans. Nykl 1931, 72).

¹The question of Ibn Ḥazm's ancestry remains unresolved. Some biographers consider his family's origins to be Persian. In his *Kitāb wafayāt al-a'yān* (Deaths of Eminent Men), for example, Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282) writes: "His ancestor Yazid was a *mutalla* [client] to Yazid Ibn Abi Sofyān Sakhr Ibn Harb Ibn Omaiyā Ibn 'Abd Shams the Omaiyid, and the first of the family who embraced Islamism. They were originally from Persia, and Khalaf was the first of his forefathers who went to Spain" (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:267). On the other hand, this genealogy may be a forgery, concocted to hide the fact that Ibn Ḥazm was really of plebeian stock, perhaps of Celtic-Roman or Gothic origins. According to Ibn Ḥazm's contemporary Ibn Ḥayyān (d. 1076), it was only with Sa'id, Ibn Ḥazm's grandfather, that the family became Muslim. According to this view, not only was Ibn Ḥazm's ancestry non-Arab; it was only recently Muslim! Dozy (1913, 580) contends that his ancestors were Christian. Asín-Palacios (1927-32, 1:19) considers it possible that they were Jewish, pagan, or of some Christian heretical sect. In any case, Ibn Ḥayyān notes that the Banū Ḥazm were of no account until Ibn Ḥazm's father, Aḥmad, became prominent in the Cordoban Umayyad court (cf. Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:19). It may well have been Aḥmad's unswerving devotion to the Umayyads (maintained by Ibn Ḥazm himself throughout his life) that led him to contrive a genealogy linking the Banū Ḥazm to the dynasty from the earliest days of its existence.

²Where this town, which no longer exists, was located is not certain. It apparently was in the western part of Spain, near the city of Huelva. The biographer Yāqūt (d. 1229) cites one of Ibn Ḥazm's disciples, who accompanied Ibn Ḥazm in the last years of his life, as claiming that Ibn Ḥazm died in his farmhouse which was located in the Algarbe of Spain on the river near the coast at a distance of a half parasang (i.e., approximately two and one-half kilometers) from Huelva. The farmhouse, the property of his ancestors, was called "Motlsham" (Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:29-30).

Apparently the sheltered existence of his early years produced a physical frailty and emotional instability in Ibn Hazm (or so he wishes us to believe). He alludes to certain physiological problems in the *Tawq*:

There are some people who have abundant tears, with lachrymal glands filled with moisture, whose eyes respond to them, and bring out a stream of tears whenever they wish. And there are people with dry eyes, devoid of tears, and I am one of them. The origin of this was my habit of taking incense on account of heartbeating which was an accident that happened to me in my youth and I may suffer a terrible, painful blow, when my heart would seem to be split and cut to pieces, and I may feel in my heart a lump more bitter than colocynth, making a proper utterance of speech impossible for me, and nearly suffocating me internally at times: yet my eye absolutely refuses to respond to me, except on rare occasions when it did yield a few tears (trans. Nykl 1931, 22-23; cf. 131).

Furthermore, in his work on human behavior and moral conduct, *Kitāb al-akhlaq wa-l-siyar* (*Characters and Conduct*), Ibn Hazm depicts himself as being of volatile temperament, experiencing extreme self-satisfaction when he was proved right and extreme anger when he was proved wrong—reactions he sought to overcome, without success, through rigorous efforts (§97; trans. Abu Layla 1990, 141; trans. Asín-Palacios 1916, 44). He also makes reference to the "hypertrophy of his spleen," which gave rise, in his opinion, to his great melancholy, bad humor, impatience, and irritability (§248; trans. Abu Layla 1990, 178; trans. Asín-Palacios 1916, 118). Despite his usually excellent memory, he once suffered an illness purportedly so severe that he forgot almost everything he knew, a condition from which he recovered only several years later (§234; trans. Abu Layla 1990, 174; trans. Asín-Palacios 1916, 112). Moreover, he describes his physical movements as characterized by a certain exaggeration (trembling?) attributable, he felt, to the weakness of his members (§100; trans. Abu Layla 1990, 141; trans. Asín-Palacios 1916, 45).

Ibn Hazm's father was a staunch supporter of the Umayyads, but when al-Manṣūr displaced them, he was politically astute enough to remain in the usurper's good graces. When al-Manṣūr died in 1002, Aḥmad retained his position of influence during the reign of al-Manṣūr's son 'Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar (cf. al-Maqqarī, vii; trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:221-222).

When al-Muzaffar died in 1008, however, his brother and successor 'Abd al-Rahmān Sanchuelo caused a decisive rupture in relations between the Umayyads and the dynasty founded by al-Manṣūr (the Amīrids) by forcing the Umayyad caliph Hishām al-Mu'ayyad, in whose name he was supposedly governing, to relinquish all claim to the throne. Al-Maqqarī describes this development:

In the course of time, however, he ['Abd al-Rahmān] undertook to usurp even the insignia of the Khalīfah as he had usurped the power, and to this end he asked Hishām to appoint him his successor to the throne — a request with which that weak monarch complied, after assembling the counsellors of the state and the notaries to witness the ceremony, and to authorize it by their presence. "It was," says an author of those days, "a very solemn ceremony" (vii; de trans. Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:222).

In the wake of these developments, Aḥmad was removed from office because he was still faithful to the Umayyad cause.

Until this time, Ibn Hazm's life had been quite serene, but it was about to change drastically. In 1009, at the age of fourteen, he moved with his family to the west side of Córdoba, just as a revolution was brewing. In the same year, while 'Abd al-Rahmān Sanchuelo was away from Córdoba on a military expedition, his enemies fomented a coup, killing the captain of the guard and occupying al-Zāhira, the palace city. They then deposed Hishām, the Umayyad caliph, and proclaimed as ruler a certain Muḥammad, a grandson of 'Abd al-Rahmān III, who was given the *laqab* (nickname) "al-Mahdī" ("the Guided One"). Sanchuelo, hearing of the revolt, hastened back to Córdoba, only to be abandoned by a great many of his soldiers who sided with al-Mahdī. Some of the defectors returned to the camp and killed Sanchuelo, presenting his head to the new caliph. With the murder of Sanchuelo, Amīrid rule came to an end.

Al-Mahdī remained in power for only ten months, for his animosity toward the Berbers eventually led to a counter-revolution led by a certain Sulaymān. He captured Córdoba, only to be ousted shortly thereafter by al-Mahdī, who was assisted by the army of his Christian allies of Toledo (al-Maqqarī, vii; trans. de Gayangos 2:225-227). The Berber ascendancy, however, was not checked so easily.

In a desperate attempt to consolidate his power, al-Mahdī, upon re-entering Córdoba, restored Hishām (whom he previously had claimed was dead!) to the throne. However, this ploy did not work. Sulaymān and his Berber forces converged on Córdoba; in fear, the citizenry and palace servants turned on al-Mahdī, who was killed by a palace eunuch in 1010. The Berbers, however, were not appeased by this action and continued the siege of Córdoba unabated. On 20 April 1013 the Berbers gained complete control of the city, sacking it and massacring its inhabitants (al-Maqqarī, vii; trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:228-229). This Berber incursion directly affected Ibn Hazm and his family.

After the death of his father the previous June, Ibn Hazm and his family had been exposed to continual harassment. With the Berber

attack, their security was compromised even further. Again in the *Tawq*, Ibn Ḥazm gives a description of what he claims to have experienced during these tumultuous days:

Thereafter my father, the vizier, may God have mercy upon him, moved from our aforementioned house on the East Side of Córdoba in the quarter of az-Zahira, to our old house in the West Side of Córdoba in Balāt Mughith, on the third day when the Commander of the Faithful Muḥammad al-Mahdī had been raised to the Khalifate, and I moved of course with him. This was in the month of Jumādā-al-Akhira, in the year 399 [1009 C.E.] After the coming of the Commander of the Faithful Hishām al-Mu'ayyad (again) to the throne, the men of power of his government worried us a good deal by adverse and hostile actions, and we were tormented by imprisonment and surveillance, and crushing contributions in money, and we went into hiding. And then the civil war was raging and affected all the people, but especially us, until my father, the vizier, died, may God have mercy upon him, while we were in this condition, late in the afternoon on a Saturday, two nights before the end of the month Dhū-l-Qa'da, in the year 402 [22 June 1012 C.E.]. And this state of affairs continued with us afterwards... Then came the mighty blows of destiny and caused us to leave our dwellings, and the Berber hosts vanquished us (trans. Nykl 1931, 160-161).

B. After the Fall of Córdoba

Finally, in July 1013 Ibn Ḥazm left for Almería (cf. *Tawq*, trans. Nykl 1931, 161), where the ruler of the city, Khayrān, an Amirid client, accused him and his friend Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, of plotting for the restoration of the Umayyad dynasty in Córdoba:

...Khayrān, lord of Almería, put me into trouble, since it was reported to him by some unjust people, who did not fear God – and God has already taken vengeance on them – about me and about Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, my friend, that we are making propaganda in behalf of the party favoring the dynasty of the Umayyads, and he kept us prisoners in his castle for months; then he sent us away on the basis of banishment... (trans. Nykl 1931, 170).

Khayrān, along with 'Alī ibn Ḥammūd, a general in Tangier supposedly in the service of Sulaymān, the Berber caliph in Córdoba, marched on Córdoba and took it in 1016. But intrigues among the new conquerors were soon to breed further instability. Ibn Ḥammūd became caliph, but Khayrān soon presented an Umayyad usurper, a grandson of al-Nāṣir, 'Abd al-Rahmān IV al-Murtaḍā, who, gaining the support of the general populace, was proclaimed caliph. Meanwhile, in 1017, 'Alī ibn Ḥammūd was assassinated, leading to the rise to power of his brother, al-Qāsim, who had Berber support. When al-Murtaḍā, betrayed by his erstwhile supporter Khayrān, died in 1018 in battle against the Zirids of Granada, who supported the Berber cause, al-Qāsim's hegemony

seemed secure. The following year, however, he was forced to flee to Seville by his brother's sons Yahyā and Idris (al-Maqqārī, vii, trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:230-241).

In the midst of all this strife between Berber and Arab, Ibn Ḥazm returned to Córdoba in 1019.³ He seems not to have remained long there, however, apparently leaving for the safe haven of Khātiba (cf. *Tawq*, trans. Nykl 1931, 58), where he redacted the *Tawq*, according to Asín-Palacios (1927-32, 1:77-78; cf. Nykl 1931, 1). In any case, when the Cordobans decided to restore the Umayyads to power in the person of 'Abd al-Rahmān V al-Mustazhir (reigned 1024), the son of al-Murtaḍā, Ibn Ḥazm was appointed to administrative office by the new caliph, along with his friend Abū 'Amir ibn Shuhayd (d. 1035), a poet and man of letters, and Ibn Ḥazm's cousin 'Abd al-Wahhāb. Unconcerned with the vagaries of politics and the intricacies of administration, al-Mustazhir spent his time engaging in literary pursuits with Ibn Ḥazm and his other protégés, with the result that "the discontented ... began to excite the lower classes of Córdoba against him as a frivolous man who spent his time with poets and sycophants" (al-Maqqārī, vii; trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 2:241-242).⁴ He also was quick to align himself with the Berbers, a move which antagonized the old Cordoban elite (Chejne 1982, 27).

When al-Mustazhir was killed in 1024 after only forty-seven days of rule, Muḥammad al-Mustakfī became caliph. Because he was seen as inimical to the new ruler, Ibn Ḥazm was imprisoned. It was at this point, Asín-Palacios surmises, that he became decidedly disenchanted with political life: "in the sad obscurity of his prison cell, he thus meditated long hours on the instability of worldly glories" (1927-32, 1:83). Exactly how long this imprisonment lasted is not known; apparently it ended with the revolution of 1026, as a result of which the older brother of 'Abd al-Rahmān IV, Hishām al-Mu'tadd, rose to power. According to Yāqūt (d. 1229), Ibn Ḥazm even became a vizier in Hishām's court, although this claim is far from certain (Arnaldez 1971, 791; cf. Chejne 1982, 28).

³According to Nykl (1931, 161), it appears that Dozy and Asín-Palacios are mistaken in their assertions that Ibn Ḥazm returned in 1018. The *Tawq*, he argues, seems to indicate otherwise. Ibn Ḥazm clearly states in the text that "I came back to Córdoba in the month of Shawwāl of the year 409," which corresponds to February-March 1019.

⁴Al-Maqqārī also makes reference to Ibn Ḥazm as vizier in *Naḥḥ al-fih*, ii (trans. de Gayangos 1:171).

C. His Conversion to Zāhirism

By this time Ibn Hazm had given up his political career, at least temporarily. As al-Andalus verged on political anarchy, he immersed himself in theological and literary endeavors. He became an adherent of the Shāfi'i legal school (*madhhab*), which had far fewer adherents in al-Andalus than the dominant Māliki school. Later,⁵ however, he adopted the Zāhiri *madhhab*, even smaller in Spain than the Shāfi'i school, which accepted only the "external sense" (*zāhir*) of the Qur'an and *Sunna*, and a very restricted use of consensus (only the *ijmā'* of the Prophet's companions was deemed authoritative); the use of analogy was rejected.⁶

As a Shāfi'i, Ibn Hazm had been looked upon with suspicion by those of the dominant Māliki *madhhab*, which did not place so much emphasis on the prophetic *Sunna*. When he became a Zāhiri, however, the antagonism increased dramatically, especially since Ibn Hazm did not hesitate to attack his opponents with such vitriol that he became a veritable outcast. As Ibn Khallikān remarks:

He was so ardent in his attacks against the learned men who preceded him, that hardly a single one could escape the virulence of his tongue. By this conduct he estranged the hearts of his contemporaries and became an object of hostility to the jurisconsults of the epoch. These persons, animated by their enmity, concurred in a refuting his opinions, exposing them as false, treating him as a reprobate, cautioning their rulers against the dangers of his proceedings, and forbidding the public to have any intercourse with him or to listen to his lessons. In consequence of this, the sovereigns of the different provinces expelled him from their states... (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:269-270).

D. His Latter Years

The latter part of Ibn Hazm's life was quite unstable. His continued pro-Umayyad sentiments made him increasingly suspect, especially after 1031, when Umayyad rule collapsed and the era of the "party kingdoms" (*mulūk al-tawā'if*) began. This political bent, coupled with his uncompromising Zāhiri convictions, earned him expulsion

from Córdoba ca. 1035 (Chejne 1982, 28). Asín-Palacios conjectures that he was on the island of Majorca for a time during the late 1040s (1927-32, 1:195-210, 227). There, it seems, in the domain of the enlightened scholar-king Mujaḥid al-'Amiri, he was able to engage in scholarly pursuits with little hindrance. Perhaps because of his recurrent hostile exchanges with Māliki jurists on the island, however, or simply because Mujaḥid's successor, 'Alī Iqbāl al-Dawla, was not nearly so indulgent with scholars as his father had been, Ibn Hazm was forced to leave Majorca ca. 1048, making his way to eastern Andalusia (Chejne 1982, 29). In the early 1050s he was probably in Seville, where his stridently articulated views quickly brought him into conflict with the king, Mu'taḍid (reigned 1042-1068), who ordered Ibn Hazm's books to be burned (Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:230-231). Fleeing Seville, Ibn Hazm travelled westward, retreating to his ancestral homeland, Mont Lisham, where he wrote in earnest until he "breathed his last on Sunday afternoon, the 27th of Shaaban, A.H. 456 [August, A.D. 1064]" (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:270).

Ibn Bashkuwāl (d. 1147), cited by Ibn Khallikān, summarizes Ibn Hazm's eminence in Islamic Spain as follows:

Of all the natives of Spain, Ibn Hazm was the most eminent by the universality and depth of his learning in the sciences cultivated by the Muslims; add to this his profound acquaintance with the [Arabic] tongue and his vast abilities as an elegant writer, a poet, a biographer, and an historian (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:268).

Al-Humaydī (d. 1095), another of the biographers cited by Ibn Khallikān, concurs, asserting that "we never saw his like for penetration, promptitude in learning by heart, nobleness of character and piety" (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:269).

E. His Literary Productivity

In the *Kitāb wafayāt al-ḥayān*, Ibn Khallikān (d. 1282) stresses Ibn Hazm's literary productivity, noting that "the number of works composed by him was very considerable" (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:267). According to Ibn Bashkuwāl, as cited by Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Hazm's son, Abū Rafī' al-Faḍl, claimed that his father had written some four hundred volumes, containing nearly eighty thousand folios (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:269). Ibn Khallikān mentions some of these works by name, including the *Kitāb al-iṣṣāl ilā fahmī kitāb il-khiṣāl* (*Guidance to the Understanding of the Book Called "al-Khiṣāl"*), "an extensive compilation" discussing legal requirements incumbent upon Muslims, the *Sunna*, *ijmā'* (consensus), the opinions of authoritative scholars of the various

⁵Exactly when Ibn Hazm left the Shāfi'i school for the Zāhiri cannot be determined from available sources. Ibn Ḥayyān claims that Ibn Hazm's change of allegiance occurred in the last years of his life. Asín-Palacios disagrees, claiming that Ibn Hazm's tenure among the Shāfi'i was brief and transitional. Ibn Hazm's *magnus opus*, the *Fisal*, the composition of which Asín-Palacios places during the reign of Hishām al-Mu'taḍid (1027-1030), i.e., some thirty-six years before Ibn Hazm's death, is already permeated with Zāhiri concepts, this suggesting that Ibn Hazm became a Zāhiri in mid-life (Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:131).

⁶For an extensive treatment of the legal schools of Islam, see Schacht 1964.

madhabs, and the rites of ḥajj; the *Kitāb al-ihkām fi uṣūl al-ahkām* (Exactitude in the Sources of Legal Judgments), containing proofs of the principles of his legal method; the *Marātib al-ʿulūm* (Categories of the Sciences), describing the scientific disciplines and their interrelation; the *Taqrīb*, introducing the science of logic, especially as it applies to law; and the *Fīṣal fi-l-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-nihāl* (Treatise on Religions, Sects, and Creeds), describing and evaluating Judaism, Christianity, Asian religions, and Muslim sects (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:267-268). Taking these works of Ibn Hazm listed by Ibn Khallikān, as well as additional ones mentioned by other biographers or by the author himself in his literary corpus, Asín-Palacios presents a provisional and incomplete catalogue of thirty-three titles attributed to Ibn Hazm in the following disciplines: philosophy (5), law (15), theology (5), history (5), and literature (3) (1927-32, 1:247-278).

Most relevant for us, however, is another of Ibn Hazm's works mentioned by Ibn Khallikān and described by Asín-Palacios²: the *Izhār tabdīl al-yahūd wa-l-naṣāra* (Exposition of the Alteration of the Torah and Gospel by Jews and Christians), in which he analyzed passages in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament containing errors and contradictions which, in his opinion, could not be explained away (trans. de Slane 1843, 2:267-268; Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:266). This extensive critique no longer exists as a separate work but, according to Goldziher (cf. Perlmann 1948-49, 270; Adang 1993, 42), was incorporated into Ibn Hazm's magnum opus, the *Fīṣal*,³ under the heading *Faṣl fi munāqadāt*

²This work is also listed in the *Kashf al-zunūn*, the bibliographical dictionary of Kātib Chelebi (d. 1657), 1:346, no. 888 (Asín-Palacios 1927-32, 1:266; Adang 1993, 42, 225).

³Most scholars accepted Goldziher's incorporation thesis, including Friedlaender (1906), Asín-Palacios (1927-32, 1:266), Tritton (1947), Perlmann (1948-49) and Waardenburg (1979), but its acceptance has by no means been universal. Steinschneider found fault with it (1966 [1877], 140; cf. 22-23), as has Aasi (1987, 76-81) in his recent dissertation on the *Fīṣal*. There are four possible relationships between the two texts: (1) that the *Izhār* was incorporated into the *Fīṣal* without change; (2) that the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* in the *Fīṣal* was based on the *Izhār* with revisions, expansions, etc.; (3) that the *Izhār* was based on what had previously been written in the *Fīṣal* as the *Treatise*; or (4) that the *Treatise* is textually unrelated to the *Izhār*, even if both addressed many of the same issues. Since possibility (1) cannot be established, I shall refer to the text under examination in this study as the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*, assuming that this self-contained work included in the *Fīṣal* bears some relationship to the *Izhār* but is not identical with it. (One indication that the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* was not composed before the *Fīṣal* is found in the *Treatise* itself. In it Ibn Hazm argues for the truth of Islam by referring to a purported statement of Paul (not found in the canonical Pauline corpus) that a false religion would not endure for more than thirty years. How can Christians then deny the truth of Islam, Ibn Hazm asks, considering that it has lasted in excess of 450 years? [2:71-72]. If this statement is not an interpolation by a later copyist, but a genuine assertion of the author, then Ibn Hazm was writing the *Treatise* ca. 450 A.H., i.e., in the late 1050s C.E. Judging from internal textual

zāhira wa-takādhīb wāḍiḥa fi-l-kitāb alladhi tusammīhi al-yahūd al-tawrāt wafī shā'ir kutubihim, wafī-l-anājil al-arba'a yutayaqqanu bi-dhālika tahrifuhā watabdīlūhā wa'annahā ghayr alladhi anzala'allāh ʿazza wajalla (Treatise on the Obvious Contradictions and Evident Lies in the Book Which the Jews Call the Torah and in the Rest of Their Books, and in the Four Gospels, All of Which Establish That These Have Been Distorted and Are Different from What God, Mighty and Exalted, Revealed; hereafter referred to as the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*, or simply as the *Treatise*), comprising some two hundred pages in the Cairo edition of 1899-1903 (1:116-224, 2:1-99). Roughly half of the text is devoted to analysis of the Torah and other Jewish texts; the rest, to the New Testament and other Christian texts.

evidence, most scholars believe that Ibn Hazm began the *Fīṣal* in the early 1030s (Aasi 1987, 81-83). It seems, therefore, that the *Treatise* was composed or revised in the final stages of Ibn Hazm's redaction of the *Fīṣal*; it does not seem likely that, in its present form at least, the *Treatise* represents the simple incorporation of the *Izhār* into the *Fīṣal*.)

CHAPTER II

The Treatise on Lies and Contradictions in Its Literary Context

As a Muslim text denying the authenticity of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* stands in a centuries-old literary tradition expounding the doctrine of *tahrif*, according to which Jews and Christians had corrupted the original Torah and Gospel by distorting either the sacred texts themselves (*tahrif al-naṣṣ*) or their meaning (*tahrif al-ma'āni*). Despite this disparagement of the earlier scriptures, however, Muslims held that testimonies to the Prophet could be found in them. Thus, two contradictory approaches to the Jewish and Christian scriptures emerged: on the one hand, they were to be regarded as falsified; on the other hand, they were used as a source for Islamic apologetics.

In this chapter, by examining how these two conflicting approaches were used by various Muslims authors before Ibn Hazm, we shall see that the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* stands apart from earlier works of the same genre on three counts. First, unlike its antecedents, it moves beyond a merely general discussion of *tahrif* to an elaborate defense of the doctrine based on detailed exegesis. Second, even while not denying that one could draw testimonies to Muhammad from the Torah and Gospel, the *Treatise*, unlike earlier texts, de-emphasizes this use of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Third, the

Treatise is characterized by a much more antagonistic tone than similar works by previous authors.

A. The Qur'an

Articulation of the doctrine of *tahrif* began in the Qur'an itself. Islam affirmed the veracity of the earlier revelations given to the People of the Book; in principle, they were fully consistent with the Qur'an. Jews and Christians, therefore, were urged to accept the revelation given to Muhammad:

O ye People of the Book! Believe in what We have (now) revealed, confirming what was (already) with you (4:47).

And this is a Book which We have sent down, bringing blessings and confirming (the revelations) which came before it (6:92).

When Jews and Christians brought arguments against Muhammad and his followers on the basis of what their scriptures taught, however, Muslims had to account for the discrepancies. How could the text of the Old and New Testaments contradict that of the Qur'an if the latter was a confirmation of the former?

A number of responses to this question are found in the *Medinan sūras*. The Jews are accused of knowingly perverting (*yuharrifūna*) the word of God after having heard and understood it (2:75). Some actually "write the Book with their own hands and then say, 'This is from God'" (2:79); these "transgressors changed (*baddala*) the word from that which had been given them" (2:59). Others corrupt the text by displacing words, changing (*yuharrifūna*) them from their right places (4:46, 5:14), or by "twisting" their tongues and reading it incorrectly:

There is among them a section who distort (*yulūna*) the Book with their tongues. (As they read) you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is no part of the Book; and they say, "That is from God," but it is not from God (3:78).

Of the Jews there are those who displace words...and say: "We hear and we disobey...with a twist (*layyan*) of their tongues..." (4:46).

Moreover, the charge of concealment (*ikhlāf*) is levelled against the People of the Book. They know the truth as they know their own sons, "but some of them conceal (*layaktumūna*) it (2:146); they thereby "swallow fire" and will receive a grievous penalty for their duplicity (2:159; 2:174). "Why do ye clothe truth with falsehood," the People of

the Book are asked, "and conceal (*yaktumūna*) the truth while ye have knowledge?" (3:71). Muhammad is depicted as coming to reveal to them much of what they used to hide in their Book (5:16). Jews are further chided for dismembering the Torah, making it into separate sheets "for show" while concealing much of its contents (6:91). Of Christians, it is said that "they forgot (*nasiū*) a good part of the message that was sent them" (5:15).

But the notion that the Jewish and Christian scriptures were trustworthy enough to provide accurate testimony in favor of Muhammad's prophethood also had its origin in the Qur'an, which asserts that the "unlettered Prophet" is mentioned in the Law and the Gospel (7:157) and that Jesus gave glad tidings "of an apostle to come after me" (61:6). Yet, just as specific textual examples were not adduced to substantiate the charge that the Jewish and Christian scriptures had been falsified, neither were the supposed references to Muhammad in the earlier scriptures specifically identified.

B. The *Ḥadīth* Literature

The Qur'anic critique of the Jewish and Christians scriptures is thus a general one. The same generality is characteristic of the *ḥadīth* literature. For example, according to a *ḥadīth* recorded by al-Bukhārī (d. 870), Muhammad taught the superiority of the Qur'an over the scriptures of the Christians and Jews without stating specifically why this was so. According to this *ḥadīth*, in response to a situation in which certain Jews were reading the Torah in Hebrew and then translating it into Arabic for a Muslim audience, Muhammad advised, "Do not say that the people of the Book are telling the truth, and do not accuse them of falsehood, but say, 'We believe in God and what he has sent down upon us'" (trans. Goldsack 1923, 12-13).

Two other *ḥadīths* have a similar message. According to the first, recorded by Ahmad ibn Hanbal (d. 855), 'Umar once came to Muhammad telling him that Muslims had heard "stories from the Jews" (about their biblical lore) which so excited their admiration that they wanted to write them down. Muhammad said in response, "Are ye bewildered like the Jews and Christians! Verily I have brought you something white and pure. If Moses had been alive, he would have been nothing but a follower of me" (trans. Goldsack 1923, 14). According to the second, recorded by al-Dārimī (d. 869), 'Umar once came to the Prophet with a copy of the Torah, saying, "O Apostle of God, this is a copy of the Taurat [Torah]." Muhammad made no

response. When 'Umar began to read aloud from the text, however, Muhammad's countenance changed, reflecting his displeasure. 'Umar stopped his reading and sought to mollify the Prophet by affirming that the people were "satisfied with Allah as our God, with Islam as our religion, and with Muhammad as our Prophet." Then Muhammad said to him, "By Him in whose hand is the life of Muhammad! If Moses had appeared to you, ye would have followed him and forsaken me, and would have gone astray from the straight path. But were Moses alive and had received my prophecy, he would certainly have followed me" (trans. Goldsack 1923, 14-15).

C. Works of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries C.E.

Near the end of the eighth century C.E., greater specificity began to accompany the claim that the Torah and the Gospel prophesied Muhammad's coming. Apparently Jews and Christians who converted to Islam were able to find texts from the scriptures of their former religions that they interpreted in this way. Especially useful in this regard were the lists of passages which the People of the Book considered to be testimonies to the coming of the Messiah (Adang 1993, 101).

1. Dialogue between Timothy I and al-Mahdi

In his account of the dialogue which he claims to have had with the Abbasid caliph al-Mahdi (reigned 775-785),¹ the Nestorian patriarch Timothy I (d. 823) depicts his opponent as arguing that the Bible predicted Muhammad's prophethood by pointing to the foretelling of the Paraclete in the gospel of John (cf. Jn. 14:16, 14:26) and to Isaiah's vision of one riding on a camel (cf. Is. 21:7) (trans. Putman² 1975, §§ 104-110, 134-136; trans. Mingana³ 1928, 169-170, 173-174).⁴ Moreover, al-Mahdi claims that "in your books there had been numerous testimonies

¹Putman (1975, 185) dates the original Syriac account of the dialogue in the period between 786 and 795 C.E.

²The Putman translation is based on a nineteenth-century Arabic manuscript of the *Dialogue*, viz., manuscript 662 of the Bibliothèque Orientale in Beirut ("B.O. 662").

³Mingana's translation is based on a thirteenth-century Syriac manuscript from the Convent of Alqōsh, the so-called "Mingana 17."

⁴Timothy interprets Is. 21:7 as follows: The one mounted on an ass is Darius; and the one mounted on the camel is Cyrus (trans. Putman 1975, §137; trans. Mingana 1928, 173).

and proofs concerning Muhammad, peace be upon him, but you have corrupted (*afsadtum*) and falsified (*harraftum*) the books" (trans. Putman 1975, §241; cf. trans. Mingana 1928, 191).

In response the patriarch asserts that "I absolutely do not see a single verse in the Gospel, the prophets, or elsewhere testifying to Muhammad, his works, or his name" (trans. Putman 1975, §101; cf. trans. Mingana 1928, 169).⁵ As for the charge of *tahriif*, Timothy advances several arguments to refute al-Mahdi's claim. First, if the scriptures had been altered at some point, there would exist versions of the Bible free of falsification. No such "unfalsified" versions are to be found, so how can Muslims know that the Gospel and other scriptures underwent corruption? Second, what would Jews or Christians gain by falsifying the scriptures? The Jews never felt the need to suppress the Messianic prophecies from their texts, even though they deny that Jesus is the Messiah; they do not dispute with Christians about the expectation of a Messiah, only about his identity. By analogy, Christians would have had no need to expurgate from their books testimony to another prophet, even if they disagreed with Muslims regarding his identity. How would it suit their needs to eliminate the foretelling of another prophet (trans. Putman 1975, §§124-129; trans. Mingana 1928, 171-172)?

Timothy resumes his argument against the charge of *tahriif* later in the text. Why would Christians dare to change the Jewish scriptures, when they "contain all the teaching of Christ" and announce his passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection (trans. Putman 1975, §§251-256; trans. Mingana 1928, 191-193)? Furthermore, how would Christians and Jews, given the enmity between them, be able to agree on the same falsification? One need only compare the Jewish and Christian versions of the Old Testament to see that even after the passing of many centuries, they agree in every detail; Christians and Jews differ not on the words of the biblical texts but on how they are to be interpreted (trans. Putman 1975, §§257-262; trans. Mingana 1928, 193). And if Christians altered the Gospel, why did they not eliminate the elements that could be seen as offensive to Christian sensibilities, e.g., the accounts of Christ's brutal scourging, passion, crucifixion, and death (trans. Putman 1975, §§265-267; trans. Mingana 1928, 194)? Besides, if

⁵Timothy also asserts that "if Muhammad had been mentioned in the gospel, it would have been necessary that his name, his mother and his people be explicitly announced in the books, as one finds written regarding the coming of Christ, peace be upon him, in the Torah and prophets. But absolutely nothing of the sort is mentioned regarding Muhammad [in the Torah and prophets], and mention is never made of him in the gospel" (trans. Putman 1975, §121, see also §129; cf. trans. Mingana 1928, 171-172).

the holy books of the Jews and Christians had foretold the coming of Muḥammad, Christians would have cherished the prophecy. After all, why would Christians accept the Jewish Messiah and reject a prophet of Ishmaelite stock? Certainly the Christians are not in any way closer to the Jews than to the Arabs (trans. Putman 1975, §§268-269; trans. Mingana 1928, 194).

2. Epistle of Ibn al-Layth

In the *Risāla* (Epistle) which Harūn al-Rashīd (reigned 764-809) commissioned Ibn al-Layth to write to Constantine VI (reigned 780-797) for the purpose of inviting the Byzantine emperor to embrace Islam, specific citations from Deuteronomy (18:18, 33:2), Psalms (9:20; 45:2-5; 149), Isaiah (21:6-9; 42:1-4, 10-12), and Habbakuk (3:3-6), as well as from the New Testament, are presented as evidence that Muḥammad was foretold in the Bible. If the Christians did not admit this evidence, it was obviously because they had distorted the proper sense of their scriptures (Adang 1993, 102, 243, 271-272).

3. Correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III

Similar to Ibn al-Layth's Epistle is the correspondence which is reported to have taken place between caliph 'Umar II (reigned 717-720) and the Byzantine emperor Leo III (reigned 717-741). The dating of 'Umar's letter attacking Christianity as preserved in the Armenian history of Ghevond is a matter of considerable controversy. The dates of Ghevond himself are difficult to establish with any certainty; he may have flourished as early as the eighth century or as late as the early tenth. According to Jeffery (1944, 269-276), he probably based his version of the correspondence on a Greek *Vorlage*, no longer extant; then, presumably, either later interpolators or Ghevond himself (if he is dated late enough) expanded the *Vorlage*. A shorter version of the letter exists in Latin. In any case, the text of 'Umar's letter as we now have it in Ghevond's history makes reference both to the corruption of the Jewish scriptures and of the testimony in the New Testament regarding Muḥammad:

Why is it that you have not been willing to accept what Jesus Himself has said as to His person, but have preferred to make researches into the books of the Prophets and the Psalms, in order to find there testimonies to prove the incarnation of Jesus? This provides a reason for suspecting that you had doubts, and regarded as insufficient the testimony that Jesus bears to Himself, since you give credence only to what the Prophets have said, whereas in truth, Jesus Himself is the

more worthy of credence, since He was near to God, and knew his person better than mere men, whose writings, in any case, have been falsified by people unknown to you. How, indeed, are you able to justify these same Scriptures, and follow them in what suits your intentions? You declare that the Code was more than once written by the Children of Israel who read it and understood it, and that it was many times lost, so that for a long period there was nothing of it remaining among them, till at a later period some men recomposed it out of their own heads. You admit that it was handed down from generation to generation, from people to people, by fleshly creatures, who inasmuch as they were sons of Adam, were forgetful, subject to error, and perhaps acting under the inspiration of Satan, and those who, by their hostile acts, resemble him. Why is it, that in the Mosaic Code one finds no clear indication of either heaven or hell, or of the resurrection or judgment? Is it the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who have spoken of these matters according to their talent. Is it not true that Jesus, speaking in the Gospel about the coming Paraclete, pointed to the mission of Muḥammad?...The Prophet Isaiah gives testimony to our lawgiver, as being the equal and the like of Jesus, when he speaks in his vision of two riders mounted, the one on an ass and the other on a camel, so why do you not believe in that? (Jeffery 1944, 277-278).

Thus, while still not demonstrating the corruption of the Jewish scriptures by referring to specific flawed texts, this letter does cite faulty transmission as a plausible cause of biblical falsification. The assertion that the Hebrew Bible propounds no doctrine of eschatology is a "negative proof" of this falsification. In arguing that the earlier scriptures testify to Muḥammad, this text does make reference to two specific texts, one in the Hebrew Bible (Is. 21:7) and one in the New Testament (Jn. 14:16 or 14:26).

4. Apology of Al-Kindi

The issue of *tahrif* is also addressed in the *Apology of al-Kindi*, which purports to be a text written at the court of the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mūn (reigned 813-833) by the Jacobite Christian 'Abd al-Masih ibn Ishāq al-Kindi in response to a letter in which 'Abdallāh the Hashimite, a cousin of al-Ma'mūn, invited him to embrace Islam. In his study of the *Apology*, Muir (1882, xvi) saw no reason to deny either the authorship or the time of composition traditionally associated with the text. Muir's claim that the *Apology* was written in the early ninth century, however, has been challenged by others who consider it a work of the early tenth century (e.g., Graf 1947, 2:142-143).

In any case, the text includes a substantial refutation of the Islamic contention that the Jewish Scriptures had suffered corruption. Like Patriarch Timothy I, al-Kindi argues that despite their irreconcilable differences on almost every other matter, Jews and Christians have

always agreed on the text of the Old Testament; neither side has ever altered it. Besides, al-Kindi points out, the Qur'an itself testifies to the authenticity of the Jewish scriptures, for example, in 10:93 ("If thou art in doubt as to what We have revealed to thee, then ask those who read the Book [revealed] from before thee...") and 2:122 ("They to whom we have given the Book read it according to its true reading. These are they that believe therein; and whosoever believeth not therein shall be lost") (trans. Muir 1882, 54). On the basis of these texts, he argues as follows:

Our "reading" is here asserted to be the right one, and thy Master [Muhammad] directeth that we (that is, the Christians) are to be asked concerning the same, and that what we declare in respect of it must be accepted. How then canst thou accuse us of corruption, or of "changing the text from its place"? That would be to contradict thyself, and go back from the rule of fair interpretation which we agreed to for the conduct of this argument (trans. Muir 1882, 54).

Furthermore, like Patriarch Timothy in the aforementioned text, he asks how it would even have been possible for the various sects, scattered as they were throughout the world, to conspire together to alter the scriptures (Muir 1882, 54).

In levelling his charge of scriptural corruption, 'Abdallāh did not point to any specific verses as proof of his position; al-Kindi therefore does not discuss any in his refutation of the Muslim's claim—this despite his tendency to use textual citation throughout the *Apology*. (He repeatedly quotes the Qur'an both to bolster his own arguments and to undercut those of his opponent.)

5. Al-Qāsim's Refutation of the Christians

The ninth-century Muslim author al-Qāsim (d. 860 C.E.) makes extensive use of biblical passages, especially from the New Testament, in his *Radd 'alā-l-naṣāra* (*Refutation of the Christians*), in which he is concerned primarily with refuting the Christian claim of Jesus' divinity. He makes numerous references to the gospel of Matthew, especially chapters 1 through 8. He bases his interpretation of Christ on five testimonies: those of God, the angels, Christ himself, his mother, and the apostles—all to be found in the Gospel. This extensive use of passages from the Gospel clearly indicates that al-Qāsim finds the Christian scriptures trustworthy enough to serve as a basis for his arguments. On the other hand, he feels that Christians have certainly distorted their meaning by false interpretation:

The Christians, however, have interpreted these books according to their own ideas and their own whims; they have fallen, therefore, into

error by being in a state of blindness in interpreting them and have drawn into error and misled all those who have followed them (trans. DiMatteo 1922, 350).

If interpreted correctly, al-Qāsim argues, the Bible, and the gospels in particular, teach the truth; he therefore exhorts the Christians to observe the Torah and the Gospel—but genuinely, not as they have erroneously come to interpret it.

6. Al-Jāhiz's Refutation of the Christians

Al-Jāhiz's (d. 869) refutation of Christian doctrine is much like that of al-Qāsim. Commissioned by the Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil (reigned 847-861) as part of his literary campaign against the People of the Book, al-Jāhiz's *Radd 'alā-l-naṣāra* (*Refutation of the Christians*) covers a wide range of topics in an attempt to discredit Christians both as adherents of a false religion and as a menace to Islamic society. In this text, Jews fare a bit better than Christians, although they are also described with scorn (Finkel 1927, 318-322).

In the course of his polemic, al-Jāhiz considers the authenticity of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. He considers the Torah to be trustworthy, although he faults the Jews for their flawed interpretation of it:

If they [the Jews] say: "What do you think of God and the Pentateuch? Do you believe that it is authentic?" we will respond, "We believe it." "So," they will say, "it is said in the Pentateuch that Israel is the first-born of God, and all that you have mentioned against us is contained in the scriptures." We will say, "These people know only very little about the different modes of expression; they ignore the art of translation; and their judgment is inspired by sentiment (more than by reason)." By my life, if they had possessed the intelligence of the Muslims and their knowledge of that which is admitted in the language of the Arabs and that which is permitted in reference to God, they would unite to that (knowledge) their knowledge of the Hebrew language and would find good interpretations for these expressions (trans. Allouche 1939, 144).

Al-Jāhiz here seems to find fault with the Arabic translation of the Hebrew scriptures. It is because Jews have rendered them improperly into Arabic that disputes have arisen between Jews and Muslims. He cites specific examples of such inappropriate translation. For example, do the Jews not claim that God, with his own fingers, wrote in the Pentateuch such things as "I am the violent God";⁶ "I am the intelligent God"; "I am the fire who devours all the other fires";⁷ "I punish the

⁶Cf. Ex. 15:3.

⁷Cf. Ex. 25:17.

infants for the crimes committed by the fathers, from the first century, from the second, from the third until the seventh⁸? Do they not claim that David said in the Psalms such things as "Open your eyes, O Master,"⁹ "Arise, O Master,"¹⁰ "Hear me, O Master,"¹¹ and "God rouses himself as a man who is inebriated with wine"¹²? Do they not depict Moses as saying in the Pentateuch that "God created things by his word and his breath"¹³ and that he brought Israel out of Egypt with his powerful arm¹⁴? Do they not translate Is. 42:10 ff. so incomprehensibly that not even a single Arab savant can discern its meaning (trans. Allouche 1939, 144-145)? In short, according to al-Jāhiz, despite its inherent veracity, the meaning of the Torah has been hopelessly distorted by the Jews as demonstrated by their inept translation of it into Arabic.

Al-Jāhiz's critique of the Christian scriptures is much less restrained. Even the Christians themselves, he argues, admit that of their four gospels, only two of them (those of Matthew and John) came from apostles. Those of Mark and Luke were written by authors who embraced Christianity at a later time. In any case, none of the four can be considered infallible:

If you maintain, to the contrary, that they are free of all falsehood and all omission, that they are infallible with regard to all that pertains to the religion of God..., we will say: the different versions of the Gospel, the contradictions which one finds in the four books, the divergences of their authors regarding the nature of Christ, and the differences that one finds in their canon laws are proof that what we impute to you is true and that you have accorded the evangelists your trust much too easily (trans. Allouche 1939, 141).

Al-Jāhiz is especially suspicious of Luke, who, he believes, was still a Jew just shortly before he composed his gospel; moreover, in the eyes of Christ, the other apostles outshone him in terms of purity of intentions, nobility of character, and honesty (trans. Allouche 1939, 141).

⁸Cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:7.

⁹Cf. Ps. 80:14.

¹⁰Cf. Ps. 3:7, 7:6, 9:9, 10:12, 17:13, 74:22, 82:8, 132:8.

¹¹Cf. Ps. 27:7, 28:2, 30:10, 39:12, 54:2, 61:1, 64:1, 84:8.

¹²Cf. Ps. 78:65.

¹³Cf. Gen 1:2.

¹⁴Cf. Ex. 6:6; Dt. 4:34, 5:15, 7:19, 9:29, 11:2.

7. Ibn Rabban's *Book of Religion and Empire* and Refutation

Al-Mutawakkil, as part of his literary campaign against the *dhimmis*, apparently also commissioned 'Alī ibn Rabban al-Ṭabarī (d. 865) to compose a work "to strengthen the motives of credibility of the Faith [of Islam]" and "to make its proofs triumph" (trans. Mingana 1922, 4). This work, *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* (*The Book of Religion and Empire*), defends the prophethood of Muḥammad from a number of perspectives.¹⁵ Ibn Rabban argues that the prophet, by proclaiming the absolute unity of God, taught the same pristine faith preached by Abraham and all the other prophets; that he proved his prophecy to be genuine by the revelation of the Qur'an, by the promulgation of holy laws and prescriptions, and by his political and military victories; that he performed miracles; and that he foretold events which came to pass both during his lifetime and after his death (trans. Mingana 1922, chaps. 1-7). The integrity of Islam is further confirmed by the honesty, righteousness, and asceticism of those who embraced it (trans. Mingana 1922, chap. 8).

Nearly half of Ibn Rabban's apology, however, is based on a single conviction: that Muḥammad was clearly foretold by the Jewish prophets and by Christ and his apostles. To prove this contention, Ibn Rabban combs the Old and New Testaments for passages which he considers to be testimonies to the coming of the Prophet. He was in a particularly good position to do so because he had been a Nestorian Christian (Samir 1983, 284-286) before his conversion to Islam. He was a physician by profession and had enough familiarity with theological matters to be able to use the scriptures of his former religion to defend the claims of his newly-adopted one. Many of the texts he adduces as testimonies to the prophethood of Muḥammad had probably already been cited as prophecies of the coming of the Messiah.

¹⁵After the appearance of Mingana's English translation of the *Kitāb al-dīn wa-l-dawla* in 1922 and his edition of the Arabic text in 1923, a spirited debate arose regarding the authenticity of the text. M. Bouyges declared it a fraud, the product of a twentieth-century pseudo-Ṭabarī (whom he implies was none other than Mingana himself!). This touched off a series of accusations and responses, with Bouyges and P. Feeters declaring the document inauthentic and Mingana, H. Guppy, D. B. Macdonald, E. Fritsch, and D. S. Margoliouth declaring it authentic. The issue is yet to be resolved, although it seems that most scholars today affirm the text's authenticity (Adang 1993, 19-20, 206).

He draws from Genesis,¹⁶ Deuteronomy,¹⁷ Psalms,¹⁸ Isaiah,¹⁹ Jeremiah,²⁰ Ezekiel,²¹ Daniel,²² Hosea,²³ Micah,²⁴ Habbakuk,²⁵ Zephaniah,²⁶ and Zechariah²⁷ (trans. Mingana 1922, 85-139; cf. Adang 1993, 271-272). In developing his arguments that Christ and the apostles testified to the coming of Muḥammad, he draws from the gospels of Matthew,²⁸ Luke,²⁹ and John³⁰ and from various epistles³¹ (trans. Mingana 1922, 140-146). Elsewhere in *The Book of Religion and Empire*, Ibn Rabban appeals to other biblical texts as well, accepting them at face value, even to the point of basing certain of his arguments on specific words.³² In short, in this work he does not question the integrity of the biblical text itself; rather, he casts doubt on the interpretation that Jews and Christians have given to it.

In *The Book of Religion and Empire*, Ibn Rabban twice makes reference to an earlier work of his entitled *Radd 'alā-l-naṣāra* (*Refutation of the Christians*). This work does not survive in its entirety; however, a manuscript of some 1200 lines discovered by Bouyges in 1931 in Istanbul contains about half of it (Bouyges 1935, 120-121). A decade

¹⁶Gen. 15:4-5, 16:6-12, 17:20, 21:13-21

¹⁷Dt. 18:15, 18-19; 33:2-3

¹⁸Ps. 45:3-5, 48:1-2, 50:2-3, 72:8-17, 110:5-7, 149:4-9

¹⁹Is. 2:12-19; 5:26-30; 9:2-6; 21:6-10, 13-14; 24:16-18; 35:1-2, 6; 40:3-5, 10-11; 41:2-3, 8-20; 32:11-13; 43:20; 45:23-24; 46:9-11; 49:1-5, 7-13, 16-21; 54:1-3, 11-14; 55:1, 4-7; 59:15-19; 60:1-7, 9-19; 62:10-12; 63:1-6, 15-16

²⁰Jer. 1:5-10, 5:15-16, 31:33-34, 49:35-38, 51:20-24

²¹Ez. 19:10-14

²²Dn. 2:31-45; 7:2-8, 19-24; 12:12

²³Hos. 13:4-5

²⁴Mic. 4:1-2

²⁵Hab. 3:3-6, 8-13

²⁶Zeph. 3:8-10

²⁷Zech. 14:9, 20

²⁸Mt. 24:2, 51-52

²⁹Lk. 22:35-36, 50-51

³⁰Jn. 14:26; 16:7, 8, 13; 14:16; 18:10-11

³¹1 Jn. 4:1-3, 1 Pet. 4:17, Gal. 4:22-26

³²To cite but one example of this: "And David—peace be with him—said in the fiftieth psalm [vv. 2-3]: 'God hath shown from Zion a *mahmūd* crown. God shall then come and shall not be idle; and fires shall devour before Him, and they shall be very tempestuous round about him.' Do you not see that the prophet David—peace be with him—does not strip from any of his prophecies the mention of *Muḥammad* or *Mahmūd*, as you read it yourselves? His saying 'a *mahmūd* crown' means that he is a *Muḥammad* and a *mahmūd* head and leader. The meaning of 'Muḥammad', 'Mahmūd', and 'Ḥamūd' is linguistically identical. The example of 'crown' is given to mean lordship and leadership" (trans. Mingana 1922, 89). Ibn Rabban uses the same exegetical technique elsewhere when he encounters a word in the text based on the root *hmd*.

later Bouyges (1949-50) published an article describing the contents of the work and the chronology of the life of its author. Two of Bouyges' fellow Jesuits edited the text, making it widely available for the first time (ed. Khalifé and Kutsch 1959).

In the prologue of this work, Ibn Rabban specifies his intentions: to provide a description of Islam; to pose seven decisive questions to Christians; to ask other questions to support the previous seven; to specify seven types of contradictions and enormities to be found in the gospels and in their creed; to describe the various sects of Christians and how each is to be refuted; to expose the falsehoods of divine paternity, filiation, and incarnation; to explain how Christians are guilty of *tahrif* in interpreting certain terms in a way contrary to their meaning³³ (ed. Khalifé and Kutsch 1959, 120; cf. Samir 1983, 293). The actual text of the *Refutation*, however, does not conform to the agenda given in the prologue. The promised discussion of *tahrif*, for example, is never presented. Nevertheless, the way in which Ibn Rabban uses biblical texts, especially from the New Testament, gives us some indication of his attitude toward the authenticity of the earlier scriptures.

That attitude seems to be somewhat less than consistent. On the one hand, it seems that Ibn Rabban equates *tahrif* with the misinterpretation of words and not with corruption of the text itself; this attitude is illustrated by his use of the Old and New Testaments throughout the *Refutation*. For example, he uses the gospels themselves to disprove the Christian creed (ed. Khalifé and Kutsch 1959, 139-141; cf. Samir 1983, 294). On the other hand, he also finds contradictions within the gospels (e.g., ed. Khalifé and Kutsch 1959, 142-143; cf. Samir 1983, 294). While certainly not considering the Christian scriptures to be perfect, Ibn Rabban sees them as trustworthy on the whole—at least trustworthy enough to provide reliable corroboration for his arguments.

8. Ibn Qutayba's Proofs of the Prophethood

When al-Mutawakkil (reigned 847-861) restored the pre-eminence of Sunni orthodoxy, suppressing the teaching of the Mu'tazilites³⁴ imposed by his predecessor al-Ma'mūn (reigned 813-833), the writings

³³The text reads at this point: "And I shall expound, with the help of God most high, the terms (*kalimāt*) which they interpret in a way different from their meaning (*ta'awulūhā bi-khalāf ma'ānihā*); and I will mention the falsification (*tahrif*) and the corruption (*fisād*) found in them" (Khalifé and Kutsch 1959, 120).

³⁴For a detailed discussion of Mu'tazilism, see Tritton 1947, 79-106.

of Ibn Qutayba (d. 889) came to enjoy considerable favor. Like Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba composed a work, *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa* (*Proofs of Prophethood*), to prove that Muhammad's mission had been foretold in the Jewish and Christian revelations. It is difficult to determine whether this text is directly dependent on Ibn Rabban's *Religion and Empire* because only portions of the *Proofs* survive in excerpts cited by other authors. Perhaps both works draw from previous compilations of biblical texts considered to be testimonies to the Prophet. One argument for direct dependence is that many of the same biblical passages used by Ibn Rabban are used by Ibn Qutayba. However, such passages are often quoted and interpreted differently in the two works. Moreover, Ibn Qutayba uses texts not adduced by Ibn Rabban; even the incomplete text of the *Proofs* that survives contains several of these (Dt. 33:12; Is. 11:6-9, 28:16, 42:1-2, 42:6-8, 54:9-10) (Adang 1993, 271-272).

In any case, it is clear that Ibn Qutayba is confident that the texts of these earlier scriptures are reliable enough to yield the "signs of our Prophet" that the Qur'an claims can be found in them (trans. Adang 1993, cf. 275, 283).³⁵ Like Ibn Rabban, Ibn Qutayba points to words based on the Arabic root *h-m-d* (equivalent to the Syriac root *sh-b-h*) as clear references to the Prophet, even if the People of the Book deny that this is so:

Now this is what is in the earlier books of God that remain in possession of the People of the Book. They recite it, and they do not deny its outward sense, except for the name of the Prophet, for they do not allow that he be openly acknowledged. However, this is of no help to them, since the name of the Prophet in Syriac is *msabbahā*, for *msabbahā* means *muhammad*, without a doubt.... And [furthermore it won't help them] because the descriptions that they acknowledge [in their literal sense] are in accordance with his [Muhammad's] circumstances, his time, his emigration, his mission, his law, and they lead us to the one to whom these characteristics apply (trans. Adang 1993, 283).

Thus Ibn Qutayba accepts that in their "outward sense" the earlier scriptures are authentic and worthy of acceptance. He accepts the integrity of the biblical text but not the faulty manner in which the People of the Book interpret it. For example, he charges that, because of *taḥrīf*, they do not admit that Paran, mentioned in Dt. 33:2, is Mecca and that the "praiseworthy one" (*alḥmad*) mentioned in Hab. 3:3 is Muhammad (trans. Adang 1993, 276-277).

³⁵Adang has translated into English excerpts from Ibn Qutayba's *Dalā'il* cited by Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200) in his *Wafā'* (1993, 275-285) and by Ibn Ḥazm in his *Al-uṣūl wa-l-furū'* (1992, 19-21).

Another clear indication of Ibn Qutayba's affirmation of the integrity of the earlier scriptures is his use of them as sources for his account of pre-Islamic history included in another of his works, *Kitāb al-ma'ārif*, (*Book of Noteworthy Information*). Although he notes that the original Torah was destroyed by fire—only to be restored afterwards by Ezra; he does not seem to doubt the authenticity of this restoration (Adang 1993, 24).

9. Hiwi al-Balkhi's *Book of Two Hundred Questions*

Those Muslims who sought to discredit the integrity of the Jewish scriptures may have found support in the work of Hiwi al-Balkhi, a renegade Jew who flourished in the late ninth century. Little is known of his life, although his name suggests that he came from Balkh in Khurasan, Persia. According to Davidson (1915, 20), he flourished between 850 and 875. His most famous work, the *Book of Two Hundred Questions*, is no longer extant, but many of the questions raised in it have been reconstructed through analysis of works composed to refute them, the most notable of which was written by the Rabbanite scholar Saadia ben Joseph (Sa'id ibn Yūsuf al-Fayyūmī; d. 942).³⁶

It is unlikely that later Muslim authors had direct access to the *Book of Two Hundred Questions*,³⁷ but it is clear that Hiwi raised many of the same objections against the Jewish scriptures that later Muslim polemicists did. Consider, for example, just several of the forty-seven questions reconstructed by Davidson (1915, 23-26):

Why should blood of animals be acceptable to God as an atonement? Are not the verses in Gen 22:17 and Dt. 7:7 contradictory to each other?
Is not God represented as eating and accepting bribes?
Were not the descendants of Lot forbidden to be admitted in the assembly of the Lord because of the incest in which their first ancestors were born?
Why should God have needed to put Abraham to test, since everything is known to Him?
Are not the verses in 2 Sam. 24:7 and 1 Chron. 21:5 contradictory to each other?
Does not the Bible also contain impossible statements?
Are not the verses in 1 Kgs. 7:13-14 and 2 Chron. 2:13 contradictory to each other?³⁸

³⁶For an overview of Saadia's life and works, see Malter 1921 (esp. 384-386) and Katz 1980.

³⁷Davidson maintains that this work was most likely written in Arabic (1915, 21). This, of course, would have increased its accessibility to Muslim scholars.

³⁸In his study of Hiwi, J. Rosenthal (1947-48, 323-340) categorizes under the following ten headings sixty-five of Hiwi's charges and questions gleaned from

Even if later Muslim polemicists like Ibn Ḥazm were not directly influenced by Ḥiwi's radical biblical criticism, they did call attention to the same types of flaws in the Jewish scriptures, viz., that they were internally contradictory, that at various points they violated the laws of reason and what he considered to be theological orthodoxy, and that they presented impossibilities.

10. Al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'rikh*

Born in the early decades of the ninth century, al-Ya'qūbī lived a cosmopolitan life. During his youth he spent time in Christian Armenia. Afterwards, he served in Khurasan (in northeastern Persia) as an administrator for the Tahirid dynasty (821-873); despite being nominally subject to the Abbasids of Baghdad, the rulers of this dynasty enjoyed virtual independence and eventually extended their domain as far as the Indian frontier. With the fall of the Tahirids, he moved to Egypt, where he died ca. 905.

Such broad experiences enabled him to compose his two most important works, the *Ta'rikh* (*History*) and the *Kitāb al-buldān* (*Book of the Countries*). The former is pertinent to our discussion here because it depends in part on biblical accounts of history, but the latter is not. In the two major divisions of his *History*, al-Ya'qūbī gives an account of pre-Islamic history and Islamic history through 872, respectively.³⁹ In the first division he includes sections on the patriarchs and prophets of Israel and on Jesus and his apostles. It is not clear whether he had direct access to the biblical text while writing this part of the *History*, or whether he was using earlier Syriac or Arabic chronicles that depended on it. Nevertheless, it is clear that al-Ya'qūbī considers the historical data found in the Jewish and Christian scriptures to be thoroughly reliable; without qualification, he interweaves biblical data with Qur'ānic material as well as Arab, Jewish, and Christian legends (Ebied and Wickham 1970, 80-82).

various works in which they are discussed: (1) God is unjust, without affection, and favors evil; (2) God is not omniscient; (3) God is not omnipotent; (4) God changes His mind, which is a sign that He is neither omniscient nor consistent; (5) God likes blood sacrifices; (6) the Bible is full of anthropomorphisms; (7) God does not work miracles; (8) the Bible admits the existence of many gods; (9) the Bible contains contradictions; and (10) many commandments, statements, and stories of the Bible lack reason.

³⁹Because he was a Shi'ite, al-Ya'qūbī gives accounts not only of the various caliphs but of the Shi'ite imams as well (Ebied and Wickham 1970, 80).

For example, in one section of his pre-Islamic history, entitled "The Israelite Prophets and Kings after Moses," he relates stories drawn from the Pentateuch, the historical books (especially 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings), and the Psalms without questioning their veracity. In the course of his narrative, he even tells how "the Torah, the prophetic books, and [the Jews'] laws and their statutes" were preserved intact despite the Babylonian exile. According to his account, during the exile, Nebuchadnezzar married a Jewish woman Sihab, daughter of Shealtiel. She convinced the king to let the Israelites return to their homeland. When they had returned, they chose Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, as their king. It is he, according to al-Ya'qūbī, who "brought out the Torah and prophetic books from the well where Bokht Nassar (Nebuchadnezzar) had hidden them," finding them "safe and sound, undamaged by the fire." He then had these holy books transcribed, "being the first one to copy these books" (trans. Ebied and Wickham 1970, 97).⁴⁰ Having thus survived intact, these holy books of the Jews are, in al-Ya'qūbī's view, authentic historical sources. Likewise, the New Testament can be considered to be a trustworthy source for the life and teaching of Jesus and his disciples. In short, this author does not posit a theory of biblical corruption.

D. Works of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries C.E.

When the charge of *taḥrif* is made in works of the eighth and ninth centuries, it is discussed in terms of textual misinterpretation rather than textual corruption. Even where there are hints of textual corruption, they are not discussed in any detail. This situation began to change in the tenth century, when the earlier scriptures were viewed with ever greater suspicion; arguments concerning their corruption are developed with ever-increasing sophistication.

1. Al-Ṭabarī's *Full Exposition of Qur'ānic Commentary and History of Prophets and Kings*

A compatriot and disciple of Ibn Rabbān (hence both share the *nisba* "al-Ṭabarī"), Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (we shall refer to him here simply as al-Ṭabarī) was born in Tabaristan in northern Iran and, after pursuing studies in Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and

⁴⁰Here al-Ya'qūbī differs from Ibn Qutayba, who, as noted above, claims that the Torah was authentically restored by Ezra after it had been destroyed by fire. Ibn Ḥazm also claims that Ezra reconstituted the Torah after its destruction, but in a faulty manner (see Chapter III.B.10, below).

Egypt, died in Baghdad in 923. A scholar of wide-ranging interests and a prolific writer, he composed works in the areas of theology, literature, and history. His two major contributions are the *Jamī' al-bayān fī tafsīr* (Full Exposition of the Qur'anic Commentary) and the *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk* (History of the Prophets and Kings). In both works, he presents his views of the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

In our examination of the Qur'anic verses regarding *tahrif*, we noted that 2:75 and 2:79 declare that the Jews had tampered with the revelation given to them. In commenting on these verses in the *Full Exposition*, al-Ṭabari cites the opinions of others and then gives his own.

With regard to the passage in 2:75 ("Can ye [O ye men of faith] entertain the hope that they will believe in you, seeing that a party of them heard the word of God and perverted it knowingly after they understood it?"), al-Ṭabari notes that if this verse indicts the early Israelites for corrupting the revelation they had received, it casts even more aspersions on their descendants, who became ever more likely to distort the truth:

How can you expect these Jews to affirm your truthfulness, when you inform them by what you tell them of the reports from God of something invisible which they have not witnessed or seen? Some of them heard from God His command and prohibition, then changed it and altered it and denied it. Those of their surviving descendants who are among you are more likely to deny the truth you have brought them, not having heard it from God but only from you; and it is more probable that they will alter the qualities and description of your prophet Muḥammad, in their scriptures, and change them wittingly, and then deny him and give him the lie. They are more likely to do this than their predecessors who heard the speech of God directly from God; they altered it after they had understood it and known it, intentionally altering it (trans. Cooper 1987, 403).

If the alteration described here was originally oral, it gradually affected the written text as well, according to al-Ṭabari. In his commentary on 2:79 ("Then woe to those who write the Book with their hands and then say, 'This is from God'...."), he asserts that the Jews "wrote a scripture according to their own interpretations, against what God had sent down to His prophet, Moses." More specifically, al-Ṭabari charges that it was the learned Jews themselves, not ignorant scribes, who made these alterations (trans. Cooper 1987, 413).

Thus, al-Ṭabari clearly held that the Jewish leaders willfully distorted the revelation given to Moses, first orally and then in written form. It is small wonder, then, that he is suspicious of the text of the Jewish scriptures. This is clearly stated in the *History of the Prophets and Kings*. Unlike al-Ya'qūbi, who freely accepts historical data presented in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, al-Ṭabari composes his history

of the world from the creation to the flood (trans. Brinner 1991), his account of prophets and patriarchs (trans. Brinner 1987), and his story of the children of Israel (trans. F. Rosenthal 1989) without reference to the Hebrew scriptures as historical sources. He apparently did not consult them directly, for when he does cite them, it is through an intermediary source (cf. Adang 1993, 29, 83, 107).

His reason for doing so is evident: in the *History* he uses only those sources which are validated by a reliable *isnād*, or chain of transmission. The Jewish scriptures have no such *isnād*; al-Ṭabari makes it clear that he considers their transmission to be highly dubious. He reports that, having withstood the *hauteur* of Nebuchadnezzar,⁴¹ the Israelites returned to Palestine; despite this fortunate turn of events, however, the Jews "had no divine scripture, for the Torah had been seized and burned, and it perished" (trans. Perlmann 1987, 64). Ezra, one of the returnees, grieved over this loss day and night in the wilderness, until one day a man (really an angel sent by God) appeared to him and, after ascertaining the cause of Ezra's grief, instructed him to fast, to cleanse himself, and to return the next day to the same place. Ezra did so. When he met with the angel the following day, he drank water from a vessel presented to him by the angel, whereupon the Torah "presented itself to Ezra's consciousness" (cf. 4 Ezra 14). Ezra then made it known to the children of Israel, who "loved it as they had never loved anything else." As long as the Torah was with them, the Jews fared well (trans. Perlmann 1987, 64-65).

While al-Ṭabari does not seem to doubt that the Torah as reconstituted by Ezra was genuine (he asserts that Ezra stayed among the children of Israel "to carry out the divine truth" [trans. Perlmann 1987, 65]), he denied that it was transmitted intact through subsequent generations, during which the rabbis had corrupted it (cf. Adang 1993, 171-173). Without the guarantee of proper transmission, the Torah—at

⁴¹In a rather chilling anecdote, al-Ṭabari describes how God punished Nebuchadnezzar for his arrogance. When Nebuchadnezzar expressed his intention to rise to the heavens and conquer them for his domain (since all the earth had already been brought under his sway), "God sent him a gnāt that entered his nostril, penetrated his brain, and bit into the very center of the brain, until the king was unable to sit or rest without pain in his head at the center of the brain. When he felt death was close, he said to his retinue, 'After I die, split my head open, and find out what it was that killed me.' When he died, they split his head open, and found the gnāt biting at the very center of this brain, so that God might show men His might and dominion" (trans. Perlmann 1987, 64).

least "the one they possess today" (trans. F. Rosenthal 1989, 184; cf. Adang 1993, 173)—was to be considered corrupt.⁴²

Al-Ṭabarī's attitude toward the Christian scriptures is much the same. In telling the story of Jesus, Mary, and the apostles, al-Ṭabarī never draws from the New Testament text directly,⁴³ rather, he refers to Gospel episodes only as they are re-cast in Muslim sources; he refers to nothing in the New Testament which in any way diverges from Qur'ānic teaching (trans. Perlmann 1987, 112-125).

2. Al-Mas'ūdī's *Meadows of Gold and Quarries of Jewels*

One of al-Ṭabarī's students in Baghdad, Abū l-Hasan 'Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) made numerous scholarly contributions in history, geography, philosophy, religion and science. His most famous work *Murūj al-dhahab wa-ma'ādīn al-jawhar* (*Meadows of Gold and Quarries of Jewels*), which includes information in all these domains, and others besides, grew out of his extensive travels in the East, which took him as far as India. In it, he describes both Judaism and Christianity and their scriptures.

Apparently, al-Mas'ūdī does not share his teacher's suspicion of the historical data presented in the Jewish scriptures. He draws heavily from them in those sections of the *Meadows of Gold* covering history from the beginning of the world until the coming of Christ; included are accounts of the prophets and kings of Israel (trans. Pellat 1962, 1:21-50). In the course of this narrative, al-Mas'ūdī mentions the fate of the text of the Torah several times. He notes that before the Temple was built, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, took Moses' copy of the Torah and placed it in a copper jar, the mouth of which he then sealed with lead. He then carried the jar to the rock on which the Temple would later be constructed. That rock split, revealing a second rock. Eleazar placed the jar with the Torah on this second rock within the split, whereupon

⁴² Al-Ṭabarī also recognizes that the Christian version of the Torah differs from that of the Jews, resulting in a difference in the way that the two groups calculate the number of years between the creation of Adam and the *hijra* (trans. F. Rosenthal 1989, 185).

⁴³ Another indication that al-Ṭabarī did not directly consult the New Testament is found in his account of Korah ibn Izhar, in which he claims that the gospels state that the keys of Korah's storehouses, because of their great number, would have been a burden for a troop of mighty men, equal to the burden of sixty mules (Brinner trans. 1991, 101). Of course, no such text is found in the gospels. Al-Ṭabarī makes his statement only on the authority of other Muslim authors who claim that it is.

the fissure closed, sealing the jar within (trans. Pellat 1962, 1:41). Apparently this copy of Moses' Torah was never recovered.

Al-Mas'ūdī asserts that when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, he took "the Pentateuch, the other books of the prophets and the chronicles of the kings which were preserved in the Temple of Jerusalem and threw them into a well"⁴⁴; they were later retrieved by those who returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel's leadership once the Persians conquered the Babylonians (trans. Pellat 1962, 1:49). The Samaritans, however, reject this story, al-Mas'ūdī tells us. They maintain that the Torah which the Jews now possess was reconstructed by Zerubbabel himself (who compiled a text on the basis of the recollection of certain Israelites) and is not the same as the one Moses brought to them;⁴⁵ it has suffered alteration and corruption (trans. Pellat 1962, 1:50).

Al-Mas'ūdī in no way affirms this Samaritan belief. As we have seen, he seems to consider the Jewish scriptures to be quite reliable as an historical source. On the other hand, later in the *Meadows of Gold* he relates that a certain Copt listed various faults of the Old Testament text and engaged in a debate with a Jewish physician in the presence of Ahmad ibn Tulūn, governor of Egypt during the latter part of the ninth century. For example, the Jewish scriptures teach that Adam was made in God's image (cf. Gen. 1:27) and that God has white hair and a white beard (cf. Dan. 7:9); in the same vein, they describe God as a consuming

⁴⁴ According to al-Mas'ūdī, Nebuchadnezzar also seized the ark of the covenant and deposited it some undisclosed place Pellat trans. 1962, 49).

⁴⁵ Zerubbabel is associated with an inauthentic version of the Torah in the following passage from the Samaritan chronicle known as "Chronicle Adler" (probably of nineteenth-century origin [Bowman 1977, 87-89]): "... a fierce quarrel broke out between the princes of the sons of Joseph and the princes of the sons of Judah, until the Babylonians heard of it, as did also the King's household who thereupon reported it to him. And he sent after them to summon them to his chamber of assembly, and asked them about the things which he had heard; and Abdiel the high priest recounted to him what had taken place between them and the sons of Judah. Then the King bade them to assemble before them and requested each party to reveal the testimonies which it claimed in the Holy Torah, in order that he might search after the truth between them. And the community of the Observers, i.e., the sons of Joseph, brought the Scroll of the Torah and recounted before the King the testimony contained therein in favor of Mount Gerizim and in proof that it was the chosen place. The sons of Judah likewise brought a book which they said was the book of King David, and Zerubbabel approached to speak before the King, saying, "King David commanded us to the effect that the threshing floor of the Jebusite which is in the city of Jebus is the chosen place." The King, seeing that the truth was not with Zerubbabel and his community, but clearly with the sons of Joseph, waxed wroth with Zerubbabel and commanded that sacrifices be brought on Mount Gerizim, and not in Jebus" (trans. Bowman 1977, 100-101).

fire and a devouring heat (cf. Dt. 4:24).⁴⁶ They claim that God punishes sons for the sins of their fathers (cf. Ex. 34:7).⁴⁷ The Torah depicts Lot's fornication with his own daughters after they had inebriated him (cf. Gen 19:31-38). It says that Moses twice refused to accept his prophetic mission, to the point of kindling God's wrath against himself (cf. Ex. 4:14) and that Aaron made a golden calf for Israel to worship (cf. Ex. 32:4).⁴⁸ It claims that the magicians of Pharaoh were able to perform the same wonders as Moses (cf. Ex. 7:11).⁴⁹ Furthermore, elsewhere in their books they teach the impious doctrine of the existence of a "little Lord" named Metatron⁵⁰ (trans. Pellat 1962, 2:303). These specific passages were obviously adduced to prove that the Jewish scriptures, as well as other texts deemed authoritative by the Jews, could not possibly be pristine: what authentic scriptures would say such things? To be sure, al-Mas'ūdi never clearly articulates the doctrine of *tahriif*, but his inclusion of the Coptic-Jewish debate seems to indicate some inclination toward it. He certainly recognizes the possibility of *tahriif* based on textual misinterpretation (cf. DiMatteo 1922, 226).

As for the Christian scriptures, al-Mas'ūdi accepts their contents only with great reservation. Even though he does not directly assail the gospels, he is willing to affirm nothing from them which is not verified in the Qur'ān:

Matthew, John, Mark, and Luke are the four apostles who transmitted the Gospel in which they give the history of Christ his birth; the manner in which he received baptism from John the son of Zachariah (i.e., John the Baptist) in the Lake of Tiberias, or, according to others, in the Jordan, the river which flows from the Lake of Tiberias and runs toward the Dead Sea; as well as the account of the wonders and miracles that he worked; the treatment which the Jews inflicted upon him; finally his ascension before God at the age of thirty-three. The Gospel furnishes many details concerning Christ, Mary, and Joseph the carpenter, but we will pass over them in silence because neither God [in the Qur'ān] nor his Prophet, Muhammad, have spoken of them (trans. Pellat 1962, 1:51-52).

⁴⁶These passages are being faulted for their teaching of divine anthropomorphism and materiality. Note that similar criticisms were advanced by al-Jāhiz (see Section C.6, above).

⁴⁷This is to attribute injustice to God.

⁴⁸To make such statements about Lot, Moses, and Aaron is to impugn their prophethood; a true prophet would never commit such immoral actions.

⁴⁹How could miracles that could be done by a genuine prophet like Moses be performed by mere magicians?

⁵⁰Such a doctrine amounts to *shirk*, i.e., attributing an associate to God, the most grievous of sins.

Obviously he does not consider the text of the gospels to be authoritative unless confirmed by Muslim sources.

3. Al-Qirḡisānī's *Book of Lights and Watchtowers*

The Jewish scholar, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn Ishāq ibn Sam'awayh al-Qirḡisānī (fl. first half of 10th cent. C.E.) produced a work entitled *Kitāb al-anwār wa-l-marāqib* (*Book of Lights and Watchtowers*), which we believe to be a significant part of the literary context of the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*. Al-Qirḡisānī was a Karaite⁵¹ and held firmly to the veracity of the Hebrew scriptures; in this work, therefore, there is no disparagement of biblical texts. However, as a Karaite, he rejected those extra-biblical, rabbinic traditions of the Rabbanites; the *Kitāb al-anwār*, consequently, presents sophisticated arguments against these texts. This is important because, as we shall see in the following chapter, Ibn Hazm's critique of the Jews' post-biblical books incorporates arguments closely resembling those of al-Qirḡisānī. To be sure, the use of such arguments antedated Ibn Hazm. For example, in the aforementioned episode of the debate between the Copt and the Jew described in al-Mas'ūdi's *Meadows of Gold*, note that the Copt assails several notions espoused in the rabbinic texts.

Al-Qirḡisānī's attack, however, is far more developed. On the basis of what is written in the mystical text *Shi'ur qomah* (see trans. M. Cohen 1985, 27 ff.), he charges that the Rabbanites attribute human likeness and corporeality to God and "describe him with the most shameful descriptions," actually giving the measure of his limbs! Such "tales and acts" contained in this text as well as in the Talmud and other rabbinic writings are unseemly even when referring merely to earthly creatures, let alone God" (trans. Nemoy 1930, 331, 350). He also charges

⁵¹The Karaites opposed the Rabbanites, the "mainstream" Jews who accepted the rabbinical tradition of the Hebrew scriptures as authoritative; that is, besides the "written Torah" of scripture, they accepted the "oral Torah" as embodied in the Talmud and other rabbinical works. The Karaites, on the other hand, rejected the oral Torah because they considered it an innovation of the rabbis.

It is generally held that Karaism began in Babylonia in the early eighth century, having its origins in the teachings of Anan ben David. According to legend (no doubt propagated by his Rabbanite detractors, who sought to discredit the roots of the movement), Anan was angry that his younger brother had been chosen to succeed their father as exilarch, i.e., head of the Babylonian Jewish community. Supposedly out of jealousy, he began to oppose the oral law and preached adherence to the Hebrew scriptures alone, declaring himself the true exilarch. His followers, first called Ananites, gradually came to be labelled by their Rabbanite opponents as *Qara'im*, which can be understood as "scripturaries" (i.e., adherents to the scriptures alone) or as "summoners" (i.e., those who called for a return to pristine biblical Judaism) (Nemoy 1987, 254).

(incorrectly) that the Rabbanites teach that the Torah that the Jews now possess is not identical with that given to Moses but is a new text that was composed by Ezra when the original Torah had been lost and forgotten³² (trans. Nemoy 1930, 331-332).

Moreover, al-Qirḡisānī faults the rabbinic texts for leading to all sorts of deviations from prescriptions clearly stated in the scriptures. This leads to Rabbanite irregularities in prayer, in Sabbath observance, in the maintenance of ritual purity and *kashrūt*, in the fixing of the festival calendar, and in marriage and family life (trans. Nemoy 1930, 332-350).

And yet, as shameful and wicked as al-Qirḡisānī finds these deviations, he is even more aghast at the non-legal teachings of the Rabbanites which "aim to abrogate the entire faith and to affirm heresy and apostasy" (trans. Nemoy 1930, 350). These include the anthropomorphisms they attribute to God. Besides the *Shi'ur qōmah*, whose inappropriate claims regarding divine corporeality have already been mentioned, the Rabbanites have a number of other texts which ascribe a body to God. According to al-Qirḡisānī, the *Alphabet of Akiba*³³ maintains that God dances before the righteous and then eats and drinks with them at the banquet he has arranged for them in the Garden of Eden. The same work also claims that God raised Enoch to such a high status that he gave him a throne 70,000 parasangs higher than the divine throne. In the *Book of Ishmael*,³⁴ al-Qirḡisānī claims, Metatron ties phylacteries to God's head every morning. In the Talmud, he adds, God is depicted as praying to himself, saying, "May it please Me that My mercy should overcome My anger so that I may deal leniently with My

³²This supposed tenet of the Rabbanites greatly upsets al-Qirḡisānī because it supports Muslim claims against the authenticity of the Jewish scriptures: "If the Moslems only knew about this assertion of theirs, they would not need any other thing to reproach us with and use as an argument against us. When occasionally some of the Moslem theologians attack us, saying: The Torah which you have is not the one Moses had brought down, we declare them to be slanderers and liars, and we assert that they say this merely because they are pressed for an argument and have no other to produce. But if they only knew about this assertion of the Rabbanites—may God forgive them (what they are saying)—they would be greatly relieved by it and would need nothing else (to use against us)" (trans. Nemoy 1930, 331-332).

³³This "semi-mystical" work, according to Scholem (1965b, 62), was written shortly after the close of the Talmudic period (i.e., after 500 C.E.). Nemoy (1930, 350) notes that the Arabic text of the excerpt given here by al-Qirḡisānī is "undoubtedly corrupt" and a misinterpretation of the Hebrew *Vorlage* (cf. ed. Jellinek, *Beit ha-Midrash*, 6 parts, 1853-77, 2:115).

³⁴Here, apparently, al-Qirḡisānī is referring to the *Hekhalot Rabboti*, in which Rabbi Ishmael is the main speaker. This work, too, dates from the early post-Talmudic period (Scholem 1946, 42-79, 356-358). The passage to which al-Qirḡisānī refers here is not found in the extant text (Nemoy 1930, 351).

creatures."³⁵ Two other books (according to al-Qirḡisānī, entitled *Order of Gehenna and Repentance of Ahub*, neither of which is extant), as well as the Talmud, teach that the Creator himself weeps and mourns, dressed in coarse clothing and plucking out his hair, bewailing the fact that he has destroyed the Temple house and exiled his people (trans. Nemoy 1930, 350-353).

Another abhorrent aspect of the Talmud, in al-Qirḡisānī's view, is its teaching regarding Metatron, or the "little Lord." In discussing this topic, he notes an episode in the Talmud in which the doctrine of Metatron is coupled with a blasphemous account of how the Creator's will is nullified by that of a mere creature:

Before him [Metatron] is an altar, the spirits of the righteous dwell near him and the souls of the scholars of the Talmud are sitting around him, while the angels stand erect before them. He studies with them the Talmud and Halakah. (At one time) they continued to study until they disagreed over the passage of the Scripture [Lev. 13:4]: 'If the bright spot be white.' They said that it is clean, whereas the Creator said that it is unclear, but these souls around Him did not agree with Him. So He sent an angel to fetch the souls of Rabba ben Nahmani, as this Rabbi was a learned and eloquent man. The angel, however, was not able to take his soul, for he heard him studying the Talmud; so he returned to his Sender and told him the matter. The Sender said to him: 'Appear before him unawares and set the trees around him in motion by means of a stormy wind, and as soon as he pauses take his soul.' He did so, and his soul ascended (to heaven) calling "clean, clean," thus nullifying the Creator's decision and supporting (that of) His opponents. Then the Creator said: "They have prevailed over Me" (trans. Nemoy 1930, 355-356).

As a result of this tale, al-Qirḡisānī dismisses the Talmud as a whole, noting that it "contains just as many shameful and insolent things as that (story), or even more" (trans. Nemoy 1930, 356).

If the Rabbanites are to be faulted for accepting the Talmud and other rabbinic works, they are also wrong in accepting the Septuagint. This acceptance yokes them with the Christians. As if this were not bad enough, the Rabbanites maintain that the Creator instructed the translators to alter ten passages, making them deviate from a literal translation of the text: "In such a way they attribute to the Creator falsification and inspiration of lies, which is the highest degree of corruption" (trans. Nemoy 1930 358-360).³⁶

³⁵Cf. *Berakoth* 7a; see Chapter III, note 13, below.

³⁶Even more reprehensible than the Rabbanites' acceptance of the Septuagint, according to al-Qirḡisānī, is their acceptance of Targum Onkelos, a paraphrastic Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch (see trans. Etheridge 1968 [1862]), which "contains absurdities which cannot even be imagined" (Nemoy 1930, 361).

Perhaps as important as the specific arguments al-Qirḡisānī brings against rabbinic literature is the method he employs, viz., discrediting texts by finding material in them that he considers objectionable on doctrinal and moral grounds. Not only does the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* incorporate many of al-Qirḡisānī's criticisms; it also manifests his method. But unlike al-Qirḡisānī, Ibn Hazm does not limit his critique to extra-biblical texts; he attempts to discredit the biblical text as well.

4. Al-Maqdisi's *Book of Creation and History*

Abū Naṣr Muṭahhar ibn Ṭahir, commonly known by his *nisba* "al-Maqdisi" ("the Jerusalemite"), flourished in the early and mid-tenth century C.E. It would seem that while serving in the court of the Samanids, the first native dynasty to rule in Persia (primarily in the areas of Transoxania and Khurasan) after the Arab-Islamic conquest, al-Maqdisi wrote a historical treatise with strong theological overtones entitled *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'rīkh* (*Book of Creation and History*). This encyclopedic work not only describes the history and doctrine of Islam but also compares it with other religions, including Judaism and Christianity (Adang 1993, 32-33).

Al-Maqdisi's attitude toward the scriptures of these two other "religions of the book" is ambivalent. He maintains that both the Torah and Gospel have been tampered with; Jews and Christians have deleted from them clear proofs of Muhammad's prophethood. And yet these earlier scriptures have not been corrupted to the point of being useless. One can still find passages in them that attest to the Prophet's advent, even if Jews and Christians deny their proper interpretation in this regard. He himself quotes Gen. 17:20 and Dt. 33:2 and refers to collections of similar proof-texts compiled by others (trans. Huart 1899-1919, 5:28-35; Adang 1993, 111-113).

However, one is to trust these scriptures only insofar as they conform to the Qur'ānic revelation and other Islamic doctrines. In other words, the Jewish and Christian scriptures still contain truth, but their textual integrity has been compromised. He claims, for example, that corruption of the Torah began during the life of Moses himself; the seventy elders that assisted Moses distorted it. Al-Maqdisi makes conflicting statements regarding the later history of the text. At one point he asserts that the text was burned during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar (trans. Huart 1899-1919, 5:32). Elsewhere he says that it had been hidden by Ezra's father Saruha. When Ezra returned from

exile, he did not know where this text was to be found, so he reconstituted the Torah by dictating it from memory. After doing so, an old woman revealed where the hidden text could be found. When it was excavated, it was found to be in exact conformity with Ezra's reconstitution. However, when Ezra handed over the text to one of his disciples, this disciple corrupted the text by adding to it and distorting it. Al-Maqdisi supports this charge of textual falsification by pointing to the existence of divergent versions of the Torah, i.e., the differing versions of the Jews, the Christians, and the Samaritans (trans. Huart 1899-1919, 5:32-33; cf. Adang 1993, 175-176).

In short, al-Maqdisi contends that Jews and Christians are guilty of both distorting the text of their scriptures (*tahrif al-naṣṣ*) and distorting the proper interpretation of them (*tahrif al-ma'ānī*). At certain points they have falsified the scriptural text; and even where they have maintained an authentic reading, they have distorted its proper meaning.

5. Al-Birūnī's *Chronology of Ancient Nations*

A scholar of encyclopedic knowledge, Abū l-Rayhān Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Birūnī (d. 1048) wrote treatises in such diverse disciplines as chronology, history, comparative culture, astronomy, mathematics, physics, and medicine. Among the most famous of his works is the *Āthār al-bāqiyah* (literally, *Vestiges of the Past*, but more commonly known as *Chronology of Ancient Nations*), in which he examines the conceptions of history prevalent among different peoples. In the course of this study, he considers the Jewish and Christian understandings of "the eras" as expressed in their sacred texts.

Like al-Maqdisi, his approach to the earlier scriptures is ambivalent. On the one hand, he finds clear testimony to Muhammad in them. Like Ibn al-Layth, Ibn Rabban, and Ibn Qutayba before him, al-Birūnī sees clear references to Muhammad in Deuteronomy and the prophecy of Isaiah. Regarding Is. 21:6-9 ("... I see a man riding on an ass, and a man riding on a camel. And one of them came forward crying and speaking: Babylon is fallen, and its graven images are broken"), al-Birūnī asserts in the *Chronology*:

This is a prophecy regarding the Messiah, "the man riding on an ass," and regarding Muhammad, "the man riding on a camel," because in consequence of his appearance Babylon has fallen, its idols have been broken, its castles have been shattered, and its empire has perished. There are many passages in the book of the prophet Isaiah predicting Muhammad, being rather hints (than clearly out-spoken words), but easily admitting of a clear interpretation. And with all this, their [the Jews' and Christians'] obstinacy in clinging to their error induces

them to devise and to maintain things which are not acknowledged by men in general, viz.: that "the man riding on the camel," is Moses, not Muhammad. But what connection have Moses and his people with Babel? (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 22).

This interpretation of Is. 21:6-9 as a testimony to the coming of Muhammad is, according to al-Birūnī, confirmed by "the word of God to Moses in the fifth book of the Thora," i.e., Dt. 18:18-19, in which the coming of a "prophet from among their [i.e., the Jews'] brethren like unto thee [Moses]" is foretold. Al-Birūnī argues that the "brethren" of the Jews, the descendants of Isaac, mentioned in this prophecy can be none other than the descendants of Ishmael, i.e., the Arabs. Thus the prophet foretold here is the prophet of the Arabs, Muhammad. To further support his claim, al-Birūnī refers next to Dt. 33:2 (which he cites as, "The Lord came from Mount Sinai, and rose up unto us from Seir, and he shined forth from Mount Paran, accompanied by ten thousand of saints at his right hand"). According to what he considers to be the correct interpretation of this passage, the Lord's coming from Sinai refers to his conversation with Moses; his coming from Seir, to the coming of Christ; and his shining forth from Paran (where Ishmael grew up and married), to the coming of Muhammad, "accompanied by legions of saints, who were sent down from heaven to help." To al-Birūnī, this interpretation of the biblical text is incontrovertible; the burden of proof is on the one who would disagree with it: "He who refuses to accept this interpretation, for which all evidence has borne testimony, is required to prove what kinds of mistakes there are in it" (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 22-23).

Thus al-Birūnī charges the Jews and Christians with distortion based on misinterpretation of their scripture. To this he adds the following accusation: "that the words in the holy books have been altered from their proper meanings, and that the text has undergone modifications contrary to its original condition" (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 23). One proof of this textual falsification is the discrepancies between the Hebrew Torah and the Greek Septuagint. He compares the Jewish and Christian accounts of how the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible was made. According to the Christians it was completed by seventy-two scholars, six from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, who knew both Hebrew and Greek. These scholars, the Christians say, did their work willingly and accurately, being able to present to King Ptolemy thirty-six translations (the scholars worked in pairs) without any significant inconsistencies among them "except those which always

occur in the rendering of the same ideas" (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 24). The Jews, however, tell a different story, according to al-Birūnī:

The Jews, however, give a quite different account, viz., that they made the translation under compulsion, and that they yielded to the king's demand only from fear of violence and maltreatment, and not before having agreed upon inverting and confounding the text of the book. There is nothing in the report of the Christians which, even if we should take it for granted, removes our doubts (as to the authenticity of their Bible); on the contrary, there is something in it which strengthens them greatly (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 24).

The existence of yet another version of the Torah—that of the Samaritans—further argues against the textual integrity of the Jewish scriptures (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 25).

If the Torah's existence in several different versions indicates its textual corruption, the same can be said for the Gospel of the Christians:

For the Christians have four copies of the Gospel, being collected into one code, the first by Matthew, the second by Mark, the third by Luke, and the fourth by John; each of these four disciples having composed the Gospel in conformity with what he [Christ] preached in his country. The reports, contained in these four copies, such as the descriptions of Messiah, the relations of him at the time when he preached and when he was crucified, as they maintain, differ very widely the one from the other (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 25).

As an example of this divergence, al-Birūnī discusses in detail the differences between the genealogies of Jesus given by Matthew (1:2-16) and Luke (3:23-31) (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 25-27). Yet another indication of the corruption of the Gospel, al-Birūnī notes, is that it exists in different forms among the Marcionites, the followers of Bardesanes, and the Manichaeans⁵⁷ (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 27; cf. 189-190).

⁵⁷All these groups were Christian heretical sects. The Marcionites, followers of the doctrine of Marcion (d. ca. 160), rejected completely the Old Testament and its "God of law" as antithetical to the "God of love" revealed by Christ. In conformity with this doctrine, their scriptural canon was restricted to ten of the Pauline epistles and an expurgated version of the gospel of Luke. They also denied the corporeality of Christ. Bardesanes, who flourished in the late second and early third centuries, taught a doctrine of astrological fatalism, which he propagated through popular hymns composed in Syriac. His followers, like those of Marcion, held that Christ's body was not real but only a phantasm; they also denied the resurrection of the dead. Manichaeans, inspired by the teachings of the third-century Zoroastrian heretic Mani (d. ca. 273), professed a highly elaborate form of Christian Gnosticism which was sharply dualistic and repudiated the material creation as evil (ed. Cross and Livingstone 1974, 132, 864-865, 870-871).

E. General Trends

In the preceding survey of the way authors prior to Ibn Hazm characterize Jewish and Christian sacred texts, certain trends in technique and tone can be detected. A description of these trends will enable us to discern Ibn Hazm's place in the intellectual tradition which they represent.

1. Trends in Technique

Over the centuries, arguments pertaining both to the earlier scriptures' testimonies to Muhammad and to their textual integrity tended to become more and more specific, with this specificity much more in evidence in discussions of the former topic than the latter. That is, on the basis of the very general claims in the Qur'an and *hadiths* that the scriptures of the Jews and Christians, while testifying to Muhammad, underwent corruption, there developed progressively elaborate discussions, especially concerning the scriptural foretelling of the Prophet.

Beginning in the eighth century, authors presented specific verses, most notably from the prophecy of Isaiah and the gospel of John, as pointing to Muhammad's advent and prophethood. The apex of this process occurred in the writings of Ibn Rabban (d. 865), who found such verses throughout the Old and New Testaments.

Although arguments aimed at proving the corruption of the Jewish and Christian scriptures remained much less dependent on the analysis of specific biblical passages, in the ninth century a particular argument evolved which was elaborated later, viz., the argument that the earlier scriptures could not possibly have been transmitted accurately. Ezra figured prominently in this argument, though not as a negative character. As we have seen, Al-Tabari (d. 923) claimed that after the Exile the Torah was fully restored by Ezra, only to be distorted subsequently. Al-Maqdisi (d. 966) too held that Ezra accurately reconstituted the Torah but that it was falsified by one of his disciples. Thus, both authors ascribed falsification of the Torah not to Ezra but to faulty transmission after his time.

Some arguments against the authenticity of the earlier scriptures based on specific passages began to appear in the ninth century. We saw how al-Jāhiz (d. 869), in finding fault with the Arabic translation of the Hebrew Bible, adduced a number of pericopes from the Pentateuch and Psalms that he deemed objectionable because of their anthropomorphic depictions of God. Ḥiwi al-Balkhī (fl. 850-875) systematically attacked the

Hebrew Bible for contradictions, doctrinally objectionable assertions, and historical impossibilities. Furthermore, we have observed that the focus of critique was widened to include extra-biblical Jewish literature (i.e., rabbinic and qabbalistic texts) by al-Mas'ūdi and the Karaite author al-Qirṣānī, both of whom wrote in the tenth century.

2. Trends in Tone

Despite their criticisms, the authors we have considered in this chapter showed remarkable restraint in their evaluations of Jews and Christians. Their attitudes toward the earlier scriptures were often quite ambivalent, characterized by a reluctance to condemn them unreservedly.

The ninth-century authors al-Qāsim, al-Jāhiz, Ibn Rabban, and Ibn Qutayba viewed the Jewish and Christian scriptures quite positively, as we have seen. Al-Qāsim held that if interpreted correctly, they were sources of truth. Al-Jāhiz faulted not the Hebrew Bible itself but the Jews' faulty Arabic translation of it. Both Ibn Rabban and Ibn Qutayba held the Old and New Testaments in high enough esteem to mine both documents for what they considered to be reliable prophecies of Muhammad's advent. Both al-Ya'qūbī in the ninth century and al-Mas'ūdi in the tenth considered the earlier scriptures reliable enough to serve as sources of data for their histories.

Even the tenth-century authors al-Maqdisi and al-Tabari, who were willing to believe the earlier scriptures only where they conformed to Islamic doctrine, do not polemicize against them nor the People of the Book for corrupting them. In fact, we saw that al-Tabari does not hold the Jews in general, or even their ordinary scribes, responsible for the falsification of their holy books but only their learned leaders, i.e., the rabbis. Moreover, we saw that, despite his view that the Jewish and Christian scriptures had been falsified, al-Birūnī still found their prophecies of Muhammad worthy of credence.

In short, their objections against the earlier scriptures notwithstanding, Ibn Hazm's predecessors, in general, maintained an even-handed approach to both Judaism and Christianity. Their critique was marked more by toleration than by polemic.

F. A Comparison of Ibn Hazm's Critique with Those of Other Authors

Before turning to the detailed presentation of Ibn Hazm's evaluation of the Jewish and Christian scriptures in the next two

chapters, we should compare and contrast his general approach with the aforementioned trends. Moreover, we shall on several counts compare his technique and tone with those of later authors who composed works in the same genre.

1. Ibn Ḥazm's Technique

In the *Treatise on Contradiction and Lies*, Ibn Ḥazm shows only minimal concern with finding proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood in the sacred texts of the Jews and Christians. He focuses, rather, on the issue of *tahrif*, supporting his arguments against the authenticity of the Torah and Gospel with detailed analyses of many specific pericopes. In this regard, Ibn Ḥazm clearly stands apart from the earlier authors we have considered. His purpose is clear: to prove that the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, as well as the extra-biblical texts deemed authoritative by Jews and Christians, are rife with lies and errors and therefore untrustworthy. It is probably for this reason that he avoids discussing testimonies to the Prophet that had been found in these texts; to find authentic material in them would be to compromise his thoroughgoing criticism of them (cf. Adang 1992, 18, 21).

However, in other ways, Ibn Ḥazm stands in the tradition shaped by previous authors. For instance, his move toward greater textual specificity in argumentation (though focusing on the issue of *tahrif* rather than the proofs of Muḥammad's prophethood) continues the trend in evidence among earlier authors. He further develops the charge of faulty textual transmission which had been levelled previously. (Ibn Ḥazm, however, introduces a significant change in this argument; as we shall see, he charges that Ezra, rather than accurately restoring the Torah, was the main culprit in distorting it [cf. Lazarus-Yafeh 1992, 66].) Although it is unlikely that he had any direct access to the work of Ḥiwi al-Balkhī (even though Ḥiwi did write his *Two Hundred Questions* in Arabic), Ibn Ḥazm's biblical criticism shows many of the same methods and motives as that of the ninth-century rationalist. It is far more likely that in his critique of rabbinic texts, Ibn Ḥazm was directly influenced by the polemic of the Karaite al-Qirqisānī.⁵⁸

Thus, while further developing—and therefore standing in continuity with—various techniques used by earlier authors, Ibn Ḥazm

breaks with the antecedent intellectual tradition in several important ways. His techniques represent a marked shift in emphasis and rigor.

2. The Tone of the Treatise

It is the tone of the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*, however, that most clearly sets it apart from the works discussed above. While the authors of those works made their points with restraint and tolerance, Ibn Ḥazm adopted a sharply polemical and intolerant approach, as we shall see in the following two chapters. In this regard the *Treatise* stands apart not only from compositions dealing specifically with the earlier scriptures but also from other texts in which non-Muslims are discussed.

Consider, for example, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950). In his philosophical work, *Mabādī' ārā' ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* (*Principles of the Views of the Citizens of the Perfect State*), he displays a markedly tolerant attitude toward other religions. For him, truth is most directly grasped by the philosopher through strict demonstration and insight. But for those who are not capable of such direct perception of truth "because neither nature nor habit, has provided their minds with the gift to understand," religion is necessary. Religion reproduces the teachings of philosophy through symbols. All religions have this purpose; despite their differences, therefore, they all express the same truth:

Now, these things are reproduced by imitation for each nation and for the people of each city through those symbols which are best known to them. But what is best known often varies among nations, either most of it or part of it. Hence these things are expressed for each nation in symbols other than those used for another nation. Therefore it is possible that excellent nations and excellent cities exist whose religions differ, although they all have as their goal one and the same felicity and the very same aims (trans. Walzer 1985, 280-281).

Although al-Fārābī does not go so far to say that all religions are equal (the symbols of some are less objectionable than those of others [trans. Walzer 1985, 281]), he does emphasize the common function of all religions despite their incidental differences. He thus manifests a remarkably tolerant attitude toward "the other."

The same attitude characterizes the writings of al-Birūnī. Despite his misgivings concerning the Jewish and Christian scriptures (discussed in Section D.5, above), he maintains dispassion and objectivity in describing non-Muslims. In the preface to his *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, he notes that to be able to describe the customs and institutions of various nations, one must depend on information given

⁵⁸For a brief discussion of Karaite influence on Muslim polemic, see Ankori 1959, 39-40 (notes 32-33).

by "the members of the different religions" and "the adherents of the different doctrines and religious sects" characteristic of those nations. In gathering such information, a spirit of objectivity must prevail; one must clear the mind of all influences "which are liable to make people blind against the truth, e.g., inveterate custom, party-spirit, rivalry, being addicted to one's passions, the desire to gain influence, etc." (trans. Sachau 1969 [1879], 3). Al-Birūnī thus clearly seeks to describe the chronologies of non-Muslim cultures with as little polemic as possible. He articulates the same method in the preface to his *Ta'rikh al-Hind (History of India)*:

... I have ... written this book on the doctrines of the Hindus, never making any unfounded imputations against those, our religious antagonists, and at the same time not considering it inconsistent with my duties as a Muslim to quote their words at full length when I thought they would contribute to elucidate a subject. If the contents of these quotations happen to be utterly heathenish, and the followers of the truth, i.e. Muslims, find them objectionable, we can only say that such is the belief of the Hindus, and that they themselves are best qualified to defend it.

This book is not a polemical one. I shall not produce the arguments of our antagonists in order to refute such of them as I believe to be in the wrong. My book is nothing but a simple historic record of facts (trans. Sachau 1971 [1910], 7).

Thus, while clearly taking exception to certain Hindu tenets and practices, al-Birūnī maintains a dispassionate and tolerant approach to the subject at hand.

In his *Farq bayn al-Firaq (Difference among the Sects)*, al-Birūnī's contemporary, Abū Maṣṣūr 'Abd al-Qāhir ibn Tāhir al-Baghdādī (d. 1037), known as al-Baghdādī, lapses into a polemic akin to Ibn Ḥazm's—but in his description of other Muslims, not non-Muslims! In his treatment of the non-Sunni sects of Islam, all of which he considers to be heretical, al-Baghdādī "starts out by saying that all but one sect, the orthodox [Sunnīs], are condemned to hell fire"; then he lists all these sects, "discussing and opposing their views, and periodically breaking forth in an exclamation of gratitude that 'we are not as they'" (Seelye 1966 [1920], 11). In this text he mentions non-Muslim religions only in passing; they are thus spared the polemical invective he heaps on his dissenting coreligionists.

If al-Baghdādī's tone in the *Farq* seems similar to Ibn Ḥazm's in the *Treatise*, it should be emphasized that al-Baghdādī adopts a much more objective approach in his *Uṣūl al-dīn (Principles of Religion)*, a systematic examination of the way that the various sects differ in their understanding of such fundamental theological terms as God and

creation. Since his *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihal (Book of Religions and Creeds)* is lost, we have no way of knowing its general tone or precisely how Judaism, Christianity, and other non-Muslim religions are characterized in it (Tritton 1960, 1:909).

Strikingly different from Ibn Ḥazm's view of other religions is that of his contemporary and compatriot Sa'id al-Andalusī (d. 1070) as expressed in his *Ṭabaqāt al-umam (Categories of the Nations)*. In this text Sa'id chronicles the advancements in human knowledge (including the disciplines of language, philosophy, logic, religion, mathematics, geometry, geography, natural sciences, art, poetry, and politics) attained not only by Muslims but by non-Muslims as well. He describes the achievements of the Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Jews even-handedly—even warmly. India, for example, is depicted as the first nation to cultivate science; it is "known for the wisdom of its people," who manifest great ability "in all branches of knowledge" (trans. Salem/Kumar 1991, 11). He characterizes the Persians as a "people of high glory and great nobility," and the Chaldeans as "a nation of ancient heritage and intelligent kings" (15, 18). He likewise extols the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians (20-37). Even while suggesting that the Jews were not known for their interest in philosophy, he underscores their achievements in other disciplines, especially medicine. One has the distinct impression that Sa'id is genuinely proud of the scholarly accomplishments of the Jews of al-Andalus, many of whom, judging from his warm comments, he apparently knew personally (79-82). All of this clearly indicates that Ibn Ḥazm's intolerance was by no means universal among scholars in eleventh-century Andalus.

The Muslim theologian and heresiographer of the following century, 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), like al-Baghdādī, composed a work entitled *Kitāb al-milal wa-l-nihal (Book of Religions and Creeds)*. Unlike al-Baghdādī, however, he avoids polemic in his analysis, even though he clearly considers Sunni orthodoxy to be the norm by which all other systems are to be judged (Kazī and Flynn 1984, 3). His treatment of Judaism is quite brief, but he describes the three major Christian sects (the Melkites [Chalcedonians], the Nestorians, and the Jacobites) in considerable detail. He faults Paul for deviating from the Christianity taught by Peter and for corrupting primitive Christianity by mixing it with philosophical ideas. Moreover, in his analysis of Christianity, he shows that "he knows a little about the Christian scriptures but does not criticise them so acutely as Ibn Ḥazm" (de Vaux 1913-36 [1987], 7:263). In general, then, al-Shahrastānī's

treatment of the People of the Book is much more charitable than Ibn Hazm's. In fact, al-Shahrastānī seems intent on classifying non-Muslim religions in a much more tolerant way than any of his predecessors; he expands the category of "People of the Book" to include Sabians, Indian Brahmins, Buddhists, and even some enlightened idolaters, thus articulating "an ecumenical Muslim worldview" which certainly differed sharply from that of Ibn Hazm (Lawrence 1987, 13:200).

Perhaps the author most reminiscent of Ibn Hazm is another twelfth-century figure, Samau'al al-Maghribī (d. 1175), a Jewish convert to Islam, who lived in various places in what is today Iraq, Syria, and Iran. His *Iḥām al-Yahūd* (*Silencing the Jews*) bears a strong resemblance to the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*; in fact, the affinity is so pronounced that one may consider whether Samau'al knew of Ibn Hazm's work and drew from it (cf. Perlmann 1964, 23). Like Ibn Hazm, Samau'al assails the attribution of objectionable qualities to God, especially anthropomorphisms, in the Hebrew Bible (trans. Perlmann 1964, 48-52). Such enormities can be explained, Samau'al says, because the historical vicissitudes of the Jews "plunged them into irrationality and vexation and led them to a form of heresy and delirium which only their incoherent minds could accept" (trans. Perlmann 1964, 51); the tone of such an explanation is reminiscent of Ibn Hazm's vitriol against the Jews. Moreover, like Ibn Hazm, Samau'al asserts that the Torah was falsified as a result of faulty transmission (53-57); that laws of the Jews give rise to various ignominies among them (62-64); and that their leaders are untrustworthy and despicable, especially the rabbis, who impose strange and new religious regimes on the people while cleverly milking the people and filching their money (62-70). In developing his arguments, Samau'al adduces many of the same texts discussed in the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*. The words by which he derides the Jews for their folly, infidelity, gullibility, and credulity echo the sentiments expressed by Ibn Hazm a century earlier:

He most deserves to be described as ignorant and branded as errant, whose nature defies the pursuit of the verities, and whose mind is far from perceiving the ultimate truth. But his station is even more miserable, who not only resists admitting the verities, but is also quick to accept the absurd and to believe the impossible, so that he deserved to be characterized as insane and degenerate. The group under consideration [i.e., the Jews] is most deserving of such a characterization, for although their ancestors daily witnessed sensorial miracles and heavenly fire and no other people did, yet they repeatedly plotted the stoning of Moses and Aaron. It is enough to mention that they chose the golden calf in the days of Moses.... It is their way to follow another nation only in its vices. Such is their ignominy and shame. As to their being quick to accept the absurd and incredible, we shall cite an instance illustrative of their lack of

intelligence, namely what happened in our own time to the cleverest, shrewdest, and craftiest among them, the Jews of Baghdad (trans. Perlmann 1964, 71-72).

Samau'al then proceeds to describe how Jews rallied to the cause of a twelfth-century Messianic impostor Menaḥem ibn Sulaymān, known as Ibn al-Rūhī, who lived in the vicinity of Amadiya (located in what is today Iraq) (72).

It is not clear why Samau'al adopted such a strident tone. As we have seen, such a tone was not typical of Muslim authors who wrote concerning the People of the Book. Perhaps it was because he, as a convert from Judaism to Islam, felt compelled to express his disdain for his former religion with a vehemence that proved beyond doubt his devotion to his new faith. However, it would be wrong to assume that it was his Jewish background that shaped his approach to other religions. If Muslims were restrained in their treatment of "the others," so were the Jews; their vulnerability as a minority discouraged open polemic against either Muslims or Christians.

Whatever their motivations, Jews of the period maintained remarkable restraint in depicting Islam and Christianity. In his *Kuzari*, for example, clearly an apologetical work designed to establish the superiority of Judaism over philosophy and the other monotheistic faiths,⁹⁹ Judah Halevi (d. 1141) refrains from vitriol. In the fictitious dialogue, he permits a Christian "scholastic" and a Muslim "doctor" to describe their respective faiths in an objective manner. His negative valuation of these other religions is articulated in the words he places in the mouth of the ruler of the Khazars (who is said to have initiated the dialogue), words characterized by scholarly even-handedness and not by polemic (trans. Hirschfeld 1964 [1905], 40-44). Even in the following century, the Jewish author Ibn Kammūna (d. 1285), in his *Tanqīh al-abḥāth li-l-milal al-thalāth* (*Examination of the Inquiries into the Three Faiths*) expresses his determination to maintain objectivity in his task:

Thus I began with the oldest, that is, Judaism, proceeded to the intermediate, Christianity, and concluded with the youngest, Islam. For each of these I have cited the fundamentals of its creed, without going into particulars, as it would have been impossible to treat them all. I have followed this with an exposition of the arguments of the adherents of each faith for supporting the true prophethood of the respective founder of each. In addition, I have adduced the objections commonly raised and their rebuttals, and have drawn attention to the main issues, distinguishing the valid points from the invalid.

⁹⁹Halevi's purpose is evident in the Arabic title of this work: *Al-hujja wa-l-dalil fi naṣr al-dīn al-dhālil* (*Proof and Evidence of the Triumph of the Despised Religion*).

I have not been swayed by mere personal inclination, nor have I ventured to show preference for one faith over the other, but have pursued the investigation of each faith to its fullest extent (trans. Perlmann 1971, 11).

In making his most pointed objections to Christianity and Islam and his most fervent arguments for Judaism, Ibn Kammūna does not lapse into invective.

Some Christians, too, could bring an even-handed objectivity to the task of comparing their religion with others. The Orthodox bishop Theodore Abūqurra (d. 825), for instance, does so in his *Maymur fi wujūd al-khālīq wa-l-dīn al-qawīm* (Treatise on the Existence of the Creator and the True Religion). While his clear intention is to prove, on rational grounds, that the religion of the Gospel alone is true, he refrains from vituperation against the other groups to which he compares Christianity, viz., the pagans, Mazdaeans, Samaritans, Jews, Manichaeans, Marcionites, Disanites (the partisans of Bardesanes), and Muslims (Dick 1982, xxxiv). He argues that if one examines what the various religions teach concerning God, morality, and the divine purpose for human beings, the superiority of Christianity can be clearly discerned on the basis of reason (xxxvii-xliii). He simply critiques what other religions teach concerning these issues; he does not inveigh against them.⁶⁰

Writing in the twelfth century, another Orthodox bishop, Paul of Antioch, defends Christianity on the basis of Islam, not in opposition to it! In his *Risāla* (Letter to Muslims), he uses the text of the Qurʾān itself not to demonstrate the falsehood of Islam or of Muḥammad's prophethood, but rather to prove to his Muslim audience that the Prophet intended Islam to be a religion specifically for Arab nomads; Muhammad had no intention of imposing Islam on Christians (trans. P. Khoury 1965, 170-171). The Qurʾān actually requires Christians to remain faithful to their religion, as indicated by the positive things it says about Christ, his mother, monasteries and churches, and the Gospel (171-172). Paul of Antioch stresses the fundamental agreement between the Qurʾān and the Gospel (173-174). In fact, he argues, the Qurʾān argues for the equality of Muslims and Christians; piety is the only criterion by which a person is to be judged (175). He concludes the Letter by expressing the hope that the ideas he has advanced will be

⁶⁰In other works, Abūqurra does engage in vituperation. He argues against the legitimacy of Muhammad's mission, asserting that Muhammad was demon-possessed, and scorns the Muslim practice of polygamy as inferior to the Christian practice of monogamy (cf. A. Khoury 1969a, 21).

accepted so that "contestation" between God's servants—Christians and Muslims alike—may cease (187).⁶¹

Thus an irenic approach to Islam was not lacking among Christian apologists. On the other hand, it must be admitted that other Christian authors gave expression to an emphatically combative attitude toward Muslims. The tone of Ibn Hazm's polemic has more in common with the works of these Christian authors than with any of the others we have considered.

For instance, in reading chapter 100/101 of the *De Haeresibus* (On Heresies) of John of Damascus (d. ca. 750), one is struck by similarities between its method and content and those of Ibn Hazm's *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*. As we shall see in the following chapters, Ibn Hazm points to the absurdities and doctrinal aberrations to be found in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, all of which point to their falsification. He assails the "shameful" practices prescribed by the Jewish Law and the "idolatrous" character of Christian worship (as evidenced by Christians' veneration of the cross). These undertakings reflect the charges that John of Damascus made against Islam some two centuries earlier.⁶² In *De Haeresibus*, he charges that Muḥammad included in his Qurʾān many "absurdities worthy of laughter" while insisting that it "was brought down to him from God" (trans. Sahas 1972, 135). While many saw Moses receive his revelation at Sinai, the Damascene notes, no one witnessed Muḥammad's supposed reception of revelation, thus implying that the Qurʾān is fraudulent. He also assails the doctrinal aberrations of the Muslims. They accuse the Christians of being "Associators" because they affirm the divinity of Christ, the Word, and the Spirit of God. By denying the divinity of the Word and the Spirit, the Muslims, John charges, are "Mutulators" because they believe in a God who is bereft of word and spirit, mutilated as if He were made of stone or wood (trans. Sahas 1972, 137)!

⁶¹Paul of Antioch does mention the charge of *taḥrīf* made by Muslims against the Christian scriptures. He does not deal with it at any length since he is unable to take it seriously. Again, he bases his defense on the Qurʾān itself. How can any believing Muslim maintain that the Jewish and Christian scriptures are not authentic? One need only read the Qurʾān's clear statement that the revelation to Muḥammad confirmed the scriptures that preceded it (3:3) and that anyone doubting the authenticity of the Qurʾānic revelation need only consult the previous scriptures (10:93), which are in full accord with it (trans. P. Khoury 1965, 173).

⁶²Even though John of Damascus lived under Islamic rule, he apparently felt secure enough to criticize the religion of his overlords quite harshly, possibly because his family was so well-respected at the Umayyad court. His father served as a tax-collector under the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (reigned 685-705). His grandfather, too, had been a prominent official who served the caliph Yazid (reigned 680-683) (Chase 1958, ix-xii).

Yes, Christians do venerate the cross, the symbol of the salvation-giving death of Christ; but this is much more honorable than the Muslim practice of venerating the stone of the Ka'ba (venerated as the "head of Aphrodite" in pagan times, the Damascene tells us), on which Abraham supposedly had intercourse with Hagar (137)! He derides the fact that Muhammad took the wife of Zayd for himself, and then produced a revelation to justify his ignominious action.⁶³ He also draws attention to the various "writings" (*graphai* = *hadiths*?) traced back to Muhammad, which, in his opinion, are replete with absurdities, for they are "idle tales worthy of laughter" (141).⁶⁴

In the same category as John of Damascus' chapter on Islam in the *De Haeresibus* is a work by another Christian author, Nicetas of Byzantium (d. 912), entitled *Confutatio falsi libri quem scripsit Mohamedes*

⁶³John of Damascus here refers to the episode in Muhammad's life in which he fell in love with Zaynab, the wife of his adopted son Zayd ibn al-Harith. When Zayd divorced Zaynab, Muhammad married her, thus causing a scandal among the Arabs; in light of the social code of the time, Muhammad's marrying his adopted son's wife seemed to verge on incest. Consternation in many circles only increased when Muhammad came forward with a revelation (33:37) which legitimated his action. (See trans. Ali 1978, 1117, notes 3722-3723.)

⁶⁴The "writing" John discusses in most detail describes a camel who, according to Muhammad, came from God. It "used to drink the whole river so that she could not pass between two mountains because there was not enough room for her to go through." According to the story, the camel was killed by evil people, leaving behind her offspring, who promptly cried to help from God and was taken up. These details occasion a number of questions which the Damascene addresses to Muslims: How did this camel have an offspring, since the Muslims deny that she was coupled with any other camel? Where was the young camel taken up to? "Your prophet, then, to whom as you say God has spoken, why did he not find out about the camel, where she is grazing and who is milking her and drinking her milk? ... [H]as she, before you already, entered paradise and from her is going to flow the river of milk that you are talking about? For you say that you will have three rivers in paradise flowing with water, wine, and milk. If your forerunner camel is outside paradise, it is obvious that she has died out of hunger and thirst, or that other people are going to enjoy her milk; and your prophet is boasting in vain that he talked with God, since there was not revealed to him the mystery about the camel. If, on the other hand, she is in paradise, she again drinks the water and you are going, for lack of water, to dry up in the midst of the delights of paradise. And if you will desire (to drink) wine from the nearby flowing river, since there will be no water (because the camel has drunk it all), drinking of it without an end you will burn inside you, and you will wobble because of drunkenness, and will be asleep. With heavy head, therefore, and after sleep, and with intoxication because of the wine you will miss the pleasures of paradise. How, then, did your prophet not think of all these...? He never cared (to find out) where the camel is living now; neither did you, however, ask him about, when, out of his dreams, he was preaching to you about the three rivers. But we assure you, definitely, that your wonderful camel has already entered before you into the souls of asses, where you also are going to abide, like animals. And there is the outer darkness and everlasting hell; a roaring fire, and ever-wakeful worm, and demons of hell" (trans. Sahas 1972, 140-141).

Arabs (Refutation of the Book Forged by Muhammad the Arab).⁶⁵ In this text he seeks to discredit not only the Qur'anic revelation but also the Prophet who brought it. He specifies the errors, doctrinal enormities, absurdities, falsehoods, and fabrications to be found in the Qur'an. In the process he discredits the psychological stability of Muhammad, charging that he was obsessed to have people recognize his divine mission and to destroy Christianity; when he could not achieve these ends by rational means, Nicetas charges, he used force. Thus, Nicetas dissected the Qur'an much as Ibn Hazm did the earlier scriptures—and with a similar purpose: to discredit the very foundations of the opponents' religion (A. Khoury 1969a, 25-26; cf. A. Khoury, 1966, 1969b, 1972). The importance of Nicetas' *Refutation* in Christian circles is hard to overestimate: "Despite these excesses, perhaps because of these excesses, the work of Nicetas was imposed on Byzantium during the centuries as the paradigm of Christian controversy against Islam" (A. Khoury 1969a, 26).

But such excesses were not limited to the Christian polemicists of Byzantium; they were found among their counterparts in al-Andalus as well. In the writings of two ninth-century authors, Eulogius (*Liber apologeticus martyrum, Memoriale sanctorum, Documentum martyriale*) and Paulus Alvarus (*Vita Eulogii*), Millet-Gerard (1984) discerns the development of a "verbal combat, i.e., a strong polemical-apologetical tradition. Militaristic language features prominently; the *militia Christi* is pitted against the enemy in a battle of darkness vs. light. The adversarial tone of such literature is enhanced by various rhetorical techniques such as apostrophe (digression on a particular object or concept), invective, pejorative diminutives, and pejorative metaphors. Muslims are described through a "semantic system" centering on such images as fraud, lying, lewdness, filthiness, insanity, bestial behavior, and evil (cf. Appendix: 145-148). Millet-Gerard points to the regular use of binary opposition in the "guerre rhétorique" being waged in the Andalusian Christian literary corpus. Christianity and Islam are "deux mondes opposés," the former characterized by beauty, purity, and salvation and the latter by ugliness, lewdness, and perdition. The force of this rhetoric is intensified by the apocalyptic urgency that typifies these writings (123, 141).⁶⁶ The conflict between Christianity and Islam

⁶⁵Nicetas could afford to be bold in his attacks on Islam since he was not living under Islamic rule.

⁶⁶A similar analysis of the literary images by which Muslim and Christian depicted each other in medieval Spain was done by Barkai (1984). His study is more wide-ranging than Millet-Gerard's in that it considers texts written during a

is interpreted from an eschatological perspective; Islam is depicted as the supreme heresy, the precursor of Antichrist (141).⁶⁷

A comparison of the treatment of Islam by John of Damascus, Nicetas, and the Andalusian Christian polemicists, on the one hand, and the treatment of Judaism and Christianity by Ibn Hazm, on the other, reveals much common ground between the Muslim author and his Christian predecessors. One is naturally led to ask whether Ibn Hazm was familiar with these Christian polemical works against Islam to the extent that he could adopt their style, "Islamizing" it and turning it against Christianity.⁶⁸

more inclusive period of history (from the eighth until the end of the twelfth centuries) and by Muslims and Hispano-Roman Christians as well as by Mozarabs. His conclusions, however, have much in common with those of Millet-Gérard. He too sees Spanish Christian texts as depicting Muslims through a distinctively negative terminology drawn largely from the Bible. Muslims, for instance, are called Hagarites, Moabites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Ishmaelites, Amorites, Chaldeans, and Saracens (supposedly descended from Sarah [286]). They are caricatured in terms of the Jewish-Gentile opposition. Christians, on the other hand, depict themselves as the "people of God," who, because of their sin, have suffered domination by the enemy. Muslims, though slower to engage in literary disparagement than were the Christians (and usually more moderate when they did so), nevertheless came to depict the Christians as idolaters, infidels, enemies of Allah, dogs, and pigs. Thus Christian and Muslim tended to "diabolize" each other, seeing the other as the embodiments of fraud, evil, cruelty, and cowardice. Christians also tended to use sexual imagery, attributing to Muslims lascivious passions toward Christian women; Muslim sources are devoid of such imagery. Moreover, Christian sources stressed apocalypticism and national particularism. Nevertheless, the literary images of Spanish Christians were more moderate than those generated in the literature of the Franks and Crusaders, but the Spanish images grew more extreme as the Reconquista progressed (283-297).

⁶⁷The Andalusian Christian polemic against Islam can be seen as part of a long Spanish struggle against specifically Christian heresies like Adoptionism and Nestorianism. There is a striking similarity, for instance, between the anti-Islamic writings of Eulogius and the anti-modalist writings of Elipandus (d. 802), archbishop of Toledo. On the other hand, Millet-Gérard sees the influence of Eastern Christian thought on the Andalusian Christian polemic. He does not go so far as to assert that the Andalusians had access to specific Eastern texts, but rather that they became familiar orally with Eastern Christian arguments against Islam. One of the primary points of contact between the Christian East and the Christian community of Islamic Spain might have been the monk George, from Mar Saba Monastery in Palestine, who suffered martyrdom in Córdoba. However, unlike the Eastern polemical works, which tend to criticize Muslims on the basis of their theology, the Andalusian Christian works tend to criticize them on the basis of their moral depravity (167-181).

⁶⁸This strain of Christian invective against Islam persisted for centuries. For example, it characterized the work of Peter the Venerable (d. 1156), the chief polemicist against Islam in the century following Ibn Hazm. His *Summa totius haeresis Saracenorum* (Summary of the Entire Heresy of the Saracens) and *Liber contra sectam sive haeresim Saracenorum* (Book Against the Sect, or Heresy, of the Saracens) both present analytical attacks, sometimes vitriolic, on the legitimacy of the Qur'an, Islamic doctrine in general, and the Prophet. One quotation from the *Summa* will suffice to illustrate how polemical Peter's tone could become: "For in no way could anyone of the human race, unless the devil were there helping, devise such fables as the writings [from the Qur'an] which here follow. By means of them, after many

G. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that the central issue addressed by Ibn Hazm in the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*, viz., *tahrif*, was first articulated in the earliest years of Islam, finding expression in the Qur'an itself. This question of the earlier scriptures' authenticity was, from the beginning, intertwined with the question of whether these scriptures provided testimonies to the coming of Muhammad. The two questions existed in mutual tension. If it was maintained that the Jewish and Christian scriptures were corrupt, how could they be used in the Muslim apologetic regarding the prophethood of Muhammad? If, on the other hand, one insisted that these texts provided reliable evidence for the defense of Islam, to what extent did one have to admit their authenticity?

As a result of this tension, Muslim authors developed a spectrum of approaches toward the earlier scriptures. At one end of the spectrum were those who asserted their total falsification, deeming them worthless unless their contents could be validated by Muslim sources. As centuries passed, more and more detailed arguments were advanced in support of this position, arguments based on a theory of faulty transmission of the biblical text. Gradually authors began to adduce specific biblical texts considered to be false, mutually contradictory, blasphemous, morally reprehensible, etc. as proof of the flawed transmission. At the other end of the spectrum, were those Muslim authors who treated the earlier scriptures as reliable sources of information, whether concerning the prophet or historical events. Most of the writers we have considered fall somewhere in between these extremes; most tended toward the latter stance, unwilling to dismiss the Jewish and Christian scriptures as so flawed as to be useless. Most adopted a more generous view of them, attributing Jewish and Christian errors more to errors in interpretation and translation than to textual corruption.

ridiculous things and the maddest absurdities, this Satan had as his object particularly and in every way to bring about that Christ the Lord would not be believed to be the Son of God and true God.... [E]mploying that most wretched man Mohammed ..., using him as an instrument and tool very suitable for him, alas, he [Satan] plunged with himself into everlasting damnation a very numerous race..." (Kritzeck 1964, 147-148). It is especially noteworthy that in Book One of the *Liber contra sectam* Peter specifically addresses and confutes the Muslim charge that the Jewish and Christian scriptures underwent corruption (Kritzeck 1964, 175-184).

It is also possible that Ibn Hazm was influenced by the vitriolic tone of, and use of invective in, Christian-Jewish polemic.

Ibn Hazm, however, stood apart from this mainstream. On the spectrum we have just described, he clearly tended toward the former extreme. He did not see the Jewish and Christian scriptures as completely untrustworthy; as we shall see, he was willing to consider certain texts (which he held were miraculously preserved by God from corruption) to be authentic testimonies to the Prophet. Nevertheless, his energies were almost completely devoted to establishing the textual corruption of the Bible through an elaboration of the theory of faulty transmission and a trenchant exegesis of specific pericopes. The intensity and detail of his analysis were without precedent. He took the long-established discourse concerning *tahrif* to a completely new level. His *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* was without parallel in the centuries preceding and immediately following its composition.

If the *Treatise's* content sets it apart from other works of the same genre, so does its tone. Again, the perspectives expressed in the various works surveyed above can be situated within a spectrum ranging from irenic to vitriolic. As we have seen, most tended toward the irenic pole. Ibn Hazm's attitude, however, falls near the opposite pole; the tone of the *Treatise* is combative and polemical – atypical of medieval Muslim and Jewish depiction of other religions. Even many Christian authors avoid the kind of invective used by Ibn Hazm, though it must be said that the tone of his work has more in common with several Christian works on Islam than with the vast majority of Muslim works on Christianity.

In short, in its analysis of both Jewish and Christian sacred texts, the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* clearly stands apart from other medieval works of the same genre. Its technique and tone are unique.⁶⁹ Having established this uniqueness in general terms, let us now turn to a detailed consideration of the contents of this important text.

⁶⁹These conclusions confirm and extend those of Adang (1993) and Lazarus-Yafeh (1992). While they limited themselves to Ibn Hazm's treatment of the Hebrew Bible, both of these authors point to the uniqueness of his exegetical method and his polemical tone. In this chapter we have seen that what they claim concerning his evaluation of the Hebrew scriptures can be said as well of his evaluation of the New Testament: no other Muslim author analyzes the Christian scriptures with such rigor and antagonism.

CHAPTER III

Ibn Hazm's Critique of the Torah and Other Jewish Texts

We have thus far discussed Ibn Hazm's critique of the Torah and other Jewish texts in broad strokes. In this chapter we shall now consider it in detail by describing the specific charges Ibn Hazm makes against these texts in the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies*, viz., that they are characterized by (1) disrespect for the prophets, (2) blasphemy, (3) arithmetical errors, (4) historical errors, (5) geographical errors, (6) internal contradictions, (7) absurdities and impossibilities, (8) divine anthropomorphisms and inappropriate imaging of God, (9) *shirk* and divine filiation, and (10) faulty textual transmission.

Since Ibn Hazm himself does not systematically present his material in these categories, we shall preface this thematic description with an examination of the way he does in fact structure the first part of the *Treatise*.

A. The Structure of the Presentation

The order of the biblical text itself provides the principle of organization for the *Treatise's* critique of the Jewish scriptures. Ibn Hazm proceeds methodically in his analysis, passing from one text to the next as follows:

- I. Introduction and statement of purpose [1:116-117]¹
- II. Examination of Genesis [1:117-153]
- III. Examination of Exodus [1:153-165]
- IV. Examination of Leviticus [1:165]
- V. Examination of Numbers [1:165-184; in this section Ibn Hazm makes frequent reference to Exodus, 2 Samuel, Joshua and Judges to show that the Torah gives inconsistent chronological and census data.]
- VI. Examination of Deuteronomy [1:184-186]
- VII. Summary statement regarding the corruption of the Torah [1:186-187]
- VIII. The impossibility of accurate textual transmission
 - A. Summary of the history of ancient Israel [1:187-196; in this section he draws materials from Joshua, Judges, 1 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.]
 - B. In light of this tumultuous history, how could the genuine Torah have been preserved? [1:197-200]
 - C. As an example, Dt. 32:1-43 is examined in detail [1:200-202]
 - D. Summary statement regarding the corruption of the Torah [1:202]
 - E. The misguided centrality of Moses in Jewish belief [1:202-204]
- IX. Examination of pericopes from other books of Jewish scripture
 - A. Joshua [1:204-205]
 - B. The Writings
 1. Psalms [1:205-206]
 2. Song of Songs [1:207-208]
 3. Proverbs [1:208]
 4. Qoheleth [1:208]

¹References in brackets refer to the 1899-1903 Cairo edition of the *Fisal*, in which the five parts of the work were printed in two volumes. The number given before the colon refers to which of the five parts is being cited; the number after it refers to the page.

- C. The Prophets
 1. Ezekiel [1:208-209]
 2. Isaiah [1:209]
 3. Why the prophetic books now in the possession of the Jews cannot be authentic [1:209-210]
- X. Why it cannot be argued that the authentic Torah is preserved in the Gospel of Jesus [1:210]
- XI. Disproving the contention that the Qur'an teaches the authenticity of the Torah and the Gospel [1:211-217]
- XII. Examination of rabbinic texts [1:217-224; included here is a description of how various biblical texts in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles were forged by the rabbis.]
- XIII. Conclusions [1:224]

Among the numerous exegetical arguments made by Ibn Hazm as he proceeds through the holy books, various themes recur. For this reason, we shall cluster these arguments for the corruption of the Torah and other Jewish texts into suitable thematic categories.

B. Corruption of the Torah and Other Sacred Texts of the Jews

Unlike Islam, "the teaching of the adherents of tradition" (*madhhab aṣḥābi-l-ḥadīth*), Judaism, according to Ibn Hazm, attributes all sorts of lies to God, his angels, and his prophets [1:116]. The Torah proceeded neither from God nor from any prophet; in fact, it cannot even be deemed the work of a wise or well-informed author. It is "indubitably the work of some impious person, false and mocking" [1:128]. The only other explanation is that the author was an imbecilic simpleton, unlearned in arithmetic, astronomy, geography, and theology, and unreflective in his writing [1:128].

In line with these convictions, Ibn Hazm develops a variety of arguments based on flaws in the Torah which cannot be explained away through allegorical interpretation or dismissed by virtue of their obscurity [1:117]. These flaws may be classified under the following headings:

1. Demeaning the Prophets

Perhaps the most impassioned charge Ibn Hazm brings against the Jewish scriptures is that they contradict the Islamic doctrine of

isma, i.e., they violate the principle that the prophets are immune from error and sin.²

For example, he takes great offense at the account of Lot's descendants given in Gen. 19:30ff. That Lot's daughters would inebriate their father and then have sexual relations with him to preserve his lineage is unthinkable to Ibn Hazm. He brings four objections to the text, all of which indicate its inauthenticity. First, were there no other men in the whole land for these women to marry, that they had to engage in incestuous relations with their own father? After all, the cave in which they were staying was not far from the city where Abraham lived. Second, incest was immoral, and yet it is blithely attributed to Lot, whom Muslims (unlike Jews) consider to be a prophet. Third, how could God give lands to these two sons of Lot, who were products of such gross immorality, in the same way that he gave lands to the sons of Israel and the sons of Esau? And finally, how would Abraham, who is depicted as a wealthy man, callously consign his nephew to an impoverished existence in a cave, especially after he had actually waged war in order to liberate Lot (Gen. 14:14-16) [1:134]? Would he now simply abandon him? Such conduct would not be appropriate for any sentient human being, let alone a prophet. It is rather behavior appropriate to the "dogs" who invented such deceptive tales [1:135]!

Similarly, how could Abraham, a prophet, commit incest by marrying his own sister, as claimed in Gen. 20:12? Ibn Hazm notes that he brought this very criticism of the Torah to Samuel Ibn Nagrela, who defended the text by arguing that the term used in reference to Sarah could mean "female relative" as well as "sister." Ibn Hazm, however, countered this argument by noting that the text here specifically defines "sister," in words attributed to Abraham himself, as "the daughter of my father." The only way in which Abraham's marriage to his sister could be defended would be by appeal to the Islamic principle of abrogation, i.e., that the law was suspended or superseded in this particular case, a possibility which the Jews refuse to admit. "With that," Ibn Hazm states, "my adversary became upset and said nothing more" [1:135].

In discussing the episode in which Jacob deceived his father Isaac into granting him the blessing intended for his brother Esau (Gen. 27:1-40), Ibn Hazm asks whether Jacob, as a prophet, could deal so duplicitously with his father [1:137-138]. Furthermore, Jacob is depicted as committing "an enormity" by having an adulterous relationship with

Leah (Gen. 29:18-28). That is, the Torah describes Jacob as cohabiting with Leah, who bears him six sons and a daughter, without ever being legitimately married to her. "God save us," Ibn Hazm writes, "from affirming such a great atrocity regarding a prophet..." What makes matters worse, he continues, is that other prophets, including Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon, are all descendants of this adulterous union [1:140]. And yet another irregularity characterizes this situation: Jacob took to himself two sisters, a practice expressly forbidden by the law of the Jews (Lev. 18:18). If the Jews respond that no such stipulation was binding before Moses, then why, Ibn Hazm asks, were other laws binding, e.g., the law against the eating of blood (cf. Gen. 9:4-5) [1:141]?

The Torah, in its story of the rape of Dinah, further demeans Jacob. How would God allow the daughter of a prophet (and consequently the prophet himself) to suffer such dishonor? Moreover, it is incomprehensible that, having suffered such dishonor, Jacob did not seek to avenge himself, as the Torah claims (Gen. 34:30) [1:143].

Although he finds the story of Judah's illicit sexual liaison with Tamar, his dead son's wife (Gen. 38), morally repugnant, Ibn Hazm is willing to accept the possibility of its occurring. After all, Judah was not a prophet and was therefore susceptible to sin. Nevertheless, the Jews, by telling this story, still manage to demean the prophets in that David and Solomon were descended from this adulterous encounter. To the argument advanced by one Jew³ that such liaisons were considered licit in that day, Ibn Hazm retorts that they obviously were not, as indicated by the facts that Tamar felt compelled to hide her identity and that Judah desisted from cohabiting with her. Then that Jew, Ibn Hazm states, became quiet, remaining sad and sullen [1:147].

At this point in the text [1:147-148], Ibn Hazm recapitulates his astonishment at how the Jews, who supposedly maintain the divine mission of their prophets, attribute impieties to so many of them. In addition to those instances already discussed, Ibn Hazm mentions a number of others. For example, Joshua is said to have married Rahab (sic), a wanton harlot.⁴ Amram is said to have married his own aunt, Jochebed, who had been born to his grandfather in Egypt (Ex. 6:20); and from such a marriage the prophets Moses and Aaron supposedly were born! David is depicted as engaging in an adulterous relationship with

²Elsewhere in the *Fisal* [4:1-35], Ibn Hazm defends this doctrine in great detail. See also Madelung 1978a.

³It is not clear whether the Jew mentioned here is Samuel ibn Nagrela (an encounter with whom Ibn Hazm mentions earlier in the text [1:135]) or someone else.

⁴Joshua's marriage to Rahab is mentioned in the Aggadah (Babylonian Talmud, *Megillah* 14b), but not in the Bible.

Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11-12), and Solomon supposedly was born of this union—events which are unthinkable to Ibn Hazm because both David and Solomon are honored as prophets in Islam. Absalom is said to have fornicated with his father's concubines (2 Sam. 16:21-22). Solomon is said to have led a libertine life, marrying foreign women and then building, at their request, temples dedicated to idols, to which sacrifices were offered (1 Kings 11:1-8). Furthermore, at various points in the Torah's narrative, Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph are all described as lying. "Marvel," Ibn Hazm exclaims, "at the enormous impiety of these people (i.e., the Jews) and at the lies which their incredulous and indecent forebears fabricated for them concerning God and his prophets!" [1:148].

In Exodus, too, Ibn Hazm finds examples of the Torah's demeaning of prophets. For example, Moses is depicted as little more than a magician. In the story of his confrontations with Pharaoh, the Egyptian magicians are able to perform the same wonders as he: both he and they change their rods into serpents (Ex. 7:10-12), change water into blood (Ex. 7:19-22), and bring on the plague of frogs (Ex. 8:6-7). How could magicians do the same works as a genuine prophet? According to the Torah, the only way in which Moses is deemed superior is that he seems to know more magic; that is, his rod-turned-serpent devours the others and he, unlike the magicians, is able to change dust into gnats (Ex. 8:16-18). The Egyptian magicians recognize the wonders performed by Moses as being from God only when they cannot produce gnats (Ex. 8:19). Does this mean that God was not responsible for the other works performed by Moses? Such a viewpoint, Ibn Hazm claims, is a horrendous enormity [1:154-155].

That the Jews could give credence to the story of the golden calf as recorded in Ex. 32 is astonishing to Ibn Hazm. It is preposterous to maintain that Aaron, a prophet and messenger of God in Islam (though not in the Bible), would fashion a false god for the people to worship, actually constructing an altar before it and offering sacrifices to it!⁵ Ibn Hazm cannot decide which is more absurd: the thoughtlessness of the liar who concocted such an old-wives' tale or the gullibility of those who believe that such an account could proceed from Moses, the mouthpiece of God [1:162]. The Qur'an (7:148-151; 20:90-96) gives the

accurate account: Aaron was forced by the people to engage in such impiety; it was really the unfaithful "Sāmīrī,"⁶ not Aaron, who perpetrated it [1:163]. Aaron is further slandered in one of the extra-biblical texts of the Jews⁷ which depicts him as saying in response to God's threat to punish Israel, "O Lord, do not do it, since we have a law against you, since my brother and I have created an enormous empire for you." It is ridiculous, Ibn Hazm argues, that Aaron would utter such lunacy [1:217].

Likewise scandalous to Ibn Hazm is the account of Moses' questioning of God's ability to give the multitude of Israelites enough meat to eat for a whole month, as he promised he would (Num. 11:18-23). Who would dare question God in such a way? Certainly not a prophet and messenger of God. Moses surely knew that God sustains all of creation. Why, then, would he think of questioning his ability to feed the people? After all, just a year or so earlier God had sent them manna and quails in abundance (Ex. 16). Could it be that Moses forgot such a miraculous event? This pericope in Numbers cannot be authentic; it is, Ibn Hazm concludes, mere "foolishness" (*hawās*) [1:181].

Another affront to the doctrine of 'isma is found in Dt. 13:1-3, viz., the idea that a prophet can arise, giving the people signs and wonders and prophecies and yet leading them into error by encouraging them to follow strange gods. Such a notion is absurd, Ibn Hazm contends, since it is precisely by the performance of miracles that a true prophet can be distinguished from a false one. God would never allow miracles to come from the hands of someone proffering falsehood. Furthermore, given the reasoning in this passage, one could never ascertain whether Moses—or any of the other prophets recognized by the Jews—was authentic. Yes, he performed miracles, but perhaps he also lied to the people. According to this pericope, such a situation would be possible. The correct teaching on this matter is preserved uncorrupted in Dt. 18:20-22: the prophet who speaks falsely in the name of God, or speaks

⁵The meaning of this term is uncertain. It is usually interpreted as "Samaritan."

⁷As for the lowing or mooing (*khuwār*) that the Qur'an attributes to the golden calf, it was, according to Ibn Hazm (who says he is drawing on the interpretation of Ibn 'Abbās), the result of wind passing through the idol's hollow body [1:163].

⁸It is uncertain which text Ibn Hazm is citing here.

⁹Here Ibn Hazm contrasts Aaron's attitude as described in this unspecified Jewish text with Muhammad's attitude as described in the Qur'an (49:17). While Aaron feels entitled to special favors as a result of his prophetic work, Muhammad makes no such claim. He does not take credit for the people's becoming Muslim; rather, he sees Islam as a gift from God.

⁶It is interesting to note that in the version of Ex. 32:25 used by Ibn Hazm, Aaron is furthermore depicted as inciting the people to strip before the calf, causing them to be "naked before their enemies" [1:162]. This detail is not found in the biblical text (which states only that Aaron "had let them loose for a derision among their enemies") but is found in *Targum Onkelos* (trans. Etheridge 1968 [1862], 552-553).

in the name of other gods, shall die; if what a prophet speaks does not come to pass, he is not to be feared as a true prophet. This latter passage stands in direct contradiction to Dt. 13:1-3, which has been falsified [1:184-185].

Moreover, how could Saul, whom the Jews consider to have been divinely inspired, have killed people unjustly (cf. 1 Sam. 22:17-19)? How could Balaam, as the Torah purports, have received help from God and his angels when he intended to go to Moab to engage in infidelity (*kufir*; Num. 22-23), only to be killed later by Moses and his army (Num. 31:8)? How could the Jews attribute prophethood to Manasseh, son of Hezekiah,¹⁰ who was impious, worshipped idols, and killed prophets (2 Kgs. 21; 2 Chron. 33)? How could they attribute miracles to Samson, who was dissolute and depraved (Judges 13-16) [1:185]?

All of these observations lead Ibn Hazzam to conclude that the Jews, having been deserted by the hand of God, have taken their religion from impious authors who attribute infidelity and lies to the prophets [1:185].

2. Blasphemy

Because they attribute lies and inconsistencies to God, the texts considered sacred by the Jews, according to Ibn Hazzam, are blasphemous. Consider, for instance, the episode in which Jacob duplicitously takes from his father the blessing intended for Esau (Gen. 27:1-40): does it not amount to blasphemy to assume, as the Torah does, that God would cooperate with such deception? This actually makes God party to a lie [1:138].

The Torah also depicts God as being inconsistent. Even after changing Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:28), for example, God continues to use his former name, as in Ex. 19:3 ("... and the Lord called him out of the mountain saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob...."). Such inconsistency amounts to a lie: if God really did give Jacob a new name, why does he himself not use it [1:143]?

In the same vein, the Torah at various points depicts God as intending to do something, only later to change his mind. Ibn Hazzam points specifically to the narrative of Ex. 32:10-14, in which God instructs Moses to leave him alone "that my wrath may burn against them [i.e., the Israelites]" but then changes his mind (he is said to have "repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people") in response to Moses' plea in their behalf. Ibn Hazzam finds two flaws in this account.

¹⁰Contrary to Ibn Hazzam's claim, Manasseh is not designated a prophet in the biblical text.

First, how could God want to destroy a people he had previously promised to preserve and increase? God would not fail in his promises; to insinuate otherwise, as this pericope does, is to call God a liar. Second, this passage attributes fickleness and changeability to God, properties characteristic of creatures, not of the Creator. How dare the Jews, who so blithely characterize God as inconsistent, challenge the Islamic doctrine of abrogation? At least *naskh* posits one divine operation followed by another which is not the product of divine whim but the result of God's eternal foreknowledge [1:163].

A similar instance of divine inconsistency is found in Ex. 33. First God avers that "I will not go up among you [to Canaan], lest I consume you in the way" (v. 3), only later to change his mind by affirming that "my presence will go up with you" (v. 14). Moreover, God clearly states that if he goes up among them, he will kill them; but when he does go up with the people, he does *not* kill them [1:164]. Thus the God of the Torah is not to be taken at his word.

Furthermore, the book of Psalms attributes falsehoods to God. In Ps. 89:36 God promises that David's line "shall endure forever; his throne as long as the sun before me." How could God have said such a thing? It is patently false: neither David's line nor his throne has endured [1:207].

But it is not only by portraying him as inconsistent or as a liar that the Jewish scriptures blaspheme God. They also apply insulting likenesses to him. In Ps. 78:65, for instance, God is depicted as awakening from sleep like a strong man who has drunk too much wine. This verse in the version cited by Ibn Hazzam adds yet another phrase, not in the Massoretic text (MT), Septuagint (LXX), or Vulgate, describing how God rouses himself: "as the unicorn (*al-jarish*) arises."¹¹ Ibn Hazzam takes great offense at such similes. It is an absurdity, he argues, to compare God to a person who is in such a slow and dull state as one awakening from sleep, especially if that person is inebriated, as this verse clearly asserts. Those who believe in such ridiculous depictions of God "deserve to be flogged" until they have some sense beaten into them or are left so completely stupid "that people persecute

¹¹The unicorn is mentioned later in Ps. 78 (77), in v. 69. At this point Ibn Hazzam also makes reference to another verse (not found in the MT, LXX, or Vulgate) in which God is likened to a unicorn: "Fear your Lord, whose power is like the power of the unicorn." I believe that he is alluding here to Ps. 92 (91):11, where the Psalmist says that "my horn [power] shall be exalted like that of the unicorn." Ibn Hazzam (or the source from which he is drawing) apparently considers God (rather than the Psalmist) to be the speaker here and therefore sees the text as likening God's power to the unicorn's.

them by stoning and no one directs a single word to them as they would to a rational person" [1:206].

The post-biblical sacred texts of the Jews continue this practice of blasphemy. According to Ibn Hazm, in one of these texts (apparently the *Mekhilta According to Rabbi Ishmael*)¹² the Jews' forty years of wandering in the desert are explained in this way: On the road from Egypt to Syria, Pharaoh had constructed an idol of Baal-zephon, a powerful talisman which impeded all who passed by. But how, Ibn Hazm asks, could a talisman of Pharaoh have such power over God? If Pharaoh indeed had such power over God, where was it when he was drowned in the Red Sea [1:218]?

Furthermore, Ibn Hazm, apparently extrapolating from passages in *Tractate Berakoth* of the Babylonian Talmud,¹³ states that the Jews believe that one Ishmael (Rabbi Ishmael b. Elisha?) heard God bewailing

¹² *Mekhilta* 20:2 ("Beshallah," c. 2) refers to the *hirot*, in front of which Israel encamped (cf. Ex. 14:2). These are described as "not leaning but tapered to the apex, not rectilinear but slightly convex, not round but square, not what a human being had made but the world of heaven; they had eyes as windows, were a kind of male and female...." These may be the "powerful talisman" to which Ibn Hazm refers. He apparently equates this talisman with Baal-zephon, mentioned in the same verse, in front of which Israel is also said to have encamped. The *Mekhilta* (20:6) says of Baal-zephon that he "survived among all the gods, so as to entice the hearts of the Egyptians." By encamping before the powerful talisman (the idol of Baal-zephon), Israel, in Pharaoh's estimation, had become "entangled" in the wilderness (Ex. 14:3) [trans. Neusser 1988, 1:135-136].

¹³ Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 3a states: "R. Jose says, I was once travelling on the road, and I entered into one of the ruins of Jerusalem in order to pray. Elijah of blessed memory appeared and waited for me at the door till I finished my prayer. After I had finished my prayer, he said to me: Peace be with you, my master! And he said to me: My son, why did you go into this ruin? I replied: To pray. He said to me: You ought to have prayed on the road. I replied: I feared lest passers-by might interrupt me. He said to me: You ought to have said an abbreviated prayer. Thus, I then learned from him three things: One must not go into a ruin; one may say the prayer on the road; and if one does say his prayer on the road, he recites an abbreviated prayer. He further said to me: My son, what sound did you hear in this ruin? I replied: I heard a divine voice, cooing like a dove, and saying: Woe to the children, on account of whose sins I destroyed My house and burnt My temple and exiled them among the nations of the world! And he said to me: By your life and by your head! Not in this moment alone does it so exclaim, but thrice each day does it exclaim thus! And more than that, whenever the Israelites go into the synagogues and schoolhouses and respond: May His great name be blessed! the Holy One, blessed be He, shakes His head and says: Happy is the king who is thus praised in this house! Woe to the father who had to banish his children, and woe to the children who had to be banished from the table of their father!..." (Simon 1965, 3a).

Babylonian Talmud, *Berakoth* 7a states: "...It was taught: R. Ishmael b. Elisha says: Once I entered into the innermost part [of the Sanctuary] to offer incense and saw Akathriah Jah, the Lord of Hosts, seated upon a high and exalted throne. He said to me: Ishmael, My son, bless Me! I replied: May it be Thy will that Thy mercy may suppress Thy anger and Thy mercy may prevail over Thy other attributes, so that Thou mayest, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice! And He nodded to me with His head...." (Simon 1965, 7a; cf. Asin-Palacios 1927-32, 3:388).

the fact that the Temple was in ruins and his people scattered. Then, according to Ibn Hazm, God is said to have grabbed Ishmael by his clothes (he was not sure Ishmael had heard him) in order to exact a blessing from him: "Bless me, O my son Ishmael!" Ibn Hazm is overwhelmed by the absurdity of this account. Who among all beings, he asks, would need the blessing of such a "dirty dog" as this Ishmael? Certainly God would not! Also, is it reasonable to think God would bemoan what he himself had done in destroying the Temple, as if he had been powerless to do otherwise? Had God repented of his action? Was he sorry for what he had done? It is not reasonable to assume so, since the exile and the opprobrium of the Jews have lasted so long. If God had wanted it to be otherwise, he would have done something to change their lot. Besides, Ibn Hazm concludes, it is impious to attribute weeping and moaning to God, to assume that he did not know whether Ishmael had heard him, and to assert that he frequented the ruins of the Temple, a "refuge of crazy people and of vile predatory animals" [1:222-223].¹⁴

Likewise impious is the tale in a Jewish text¹⁵ that Joseph's brothers, after selling Joseph into bondage, placed a curse on anyone who would inform Jacob of their action. Therefore neither God nor the angels let Jacob know. Is it not blasphemous to assume that God would fear a human curse? This alone, Ibn Hazm asserts, establishes that the Jews are "the most imbecilic, impious, lying people in the world" [1:217].

Ibn Hazm also decries a particular Jewish practice as blasphemous. According to his description, the Jews spend forty nights in vigil during the months of Elul and Tishri (September-October)¹⁶, at which time they lament the hardships and disgraces they have endured. In the course of this observance, they ask God why he has treated them so badly, delivering them to every tyrant, despite their loyalty to him and their adherence to the right religion. How, they demand to know

¹⁴ Ibn Hazm's characterization of the Temple ruins as a haunt of the insane and of vile animals reflects the Islamic tradition that when 'Umar entered Jerusalem after conquering it in 638, he found the Temple Mount to be a disgusting dunghill (see Peters 1985, 186-190).

¹⁵ *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 38 states that the brothers of Joseph said: "Let us swear among ourselves that no one of us shall declare the matter to our father Jacob. Judah said to them: Reuben is not here, and the ban cannot be valid through nine (adults). What did they do? They associated the Omnipresent with them and proclaimed the ban" [trans. Friedlander 1916, 293; also *Midrash Tanhuma*, pericope *wayyashub* (Gen 37)].

¹⁶ Ibn Hazm is apparently making reference to the fact that, since Elul precedes the Ten Days of Repentance before Yom Kippur, it had become a month of repentance and special ascetical practices (cf. Agnon 1948, 16-17; Elbogen 1993 [1913], 181).

of him, can he say his decrees are just when he has allowed them to suffer such ignominy? "Marvel," Ibn Hazm writes, "at the stupidity of this coarse and villainous rabble!" How dare they dispute not only with prophets and angels but even with God himself? Because of their impiety, Ibn Hazm asserts, the Jews deserve every calamity that has been visited upon them [1:224].

3. Arithmetical Errors

A further indication of the corruption of the Torah and other biblical texts, according to Ibn Hazm's argumentation in the *Treatise*, is that they contain numerous arithmetical errors. Some of the examples he provides are relatively simple; others are quite complex.

Of the first sort is his critique of the Torah's account of Shem's age after the flood. According to Gen. 5:32, Noah was five hundred years old when he begot Shem. Gen. 7:6 states that Noah was six hundred years old when the flood came upon the earth. Shem would therefore have been one hundred years old at the time of the flood. Gen. 11:10, however, states that he had attained that age *two years* after the flood. Anyone with a grasp of even simple arithmetic could detect the inconsistency here [1:124].

Ibn Hazm detects problems with the tabulation of the descendants of Jacob in Gen. 46, seeing in this pericope a miscalculation to be explained by human tampering with the text—since obviously no one would dare attribute such an arithmetical error to God!¹⁷ Verses 9-14 list Jacob's offspring through Leah. These include Reuben and his four sons (5), Simeon and his six sons (7), Levi and his three sons (4), Judah and his three sons and two grandsons by Perez (6), Issachar and his four sons (5), Zebulun and his three sons (4), and, finally, Dinah. This yields a total of 32, not 33 as stated in v. 15. This error then causes a further error in calculation. Verses 16-18 list Jacob's offspring through Zilpah (a total of 16); vv. 19-20, his offspring through Rachel (a total of 14); and vv. 23-25, his offspring through Bilhah (a total of 7). The pericope ends with the summary that all the offspring of Jacob who came into Egypt numbered 66 (v. 26), and the total number of the house of Jacob in Egypt amounted to 70 (v. 27). To these figures Ibn Hazm reacts as follows:

¹⁷Some exegetes today see these textual difficulties as the result of a concerted effort on the part of the author or editor to bring the total to seventy, a number which had acquired traditional significance (cf. Ex. 1:5, Dt. 10:22). For a detailed exegesis of these verses and an extensive bibliography regarding the genealogy presented in them, see Westermann 1982, 150-151, 158-163.

This is a monstrous error because the sum of the aforementioned numbers [32+16+14+7] is 69, and if the two sons of Joseph born to him in Egypt are subtracted from them, there remain 67, while it says 66. This is a lie. Then it said, "All of those who entered into Egypt with him were 70." And this is another lie. We have already maintained that the one who fabricated the Torah for them was dim-witted in numbers [1:150].

Thus Ibn Hazm claims to have found another numerical inconsistency, further supporting his charge of *tahrif* [1:150].

Taking as his point of departure the assertion in Ex. 12:40 that Israel dwelt in Egypt 430 years, Ibn Hazm points to another inconsistency. We are told in Gen. 6:11 that Kohath, the son of Levi, was among those who descended to Egypt with Jacob. Assume for the sake of argument, Ibn Hazm says, that he was a month old or less when he arrived in Egypt and therefore spent all of his 137 years there (cf. Ex. 6:16). Assume further, he tells the reader, that his son Amram was born after his father's death and that Moses, the son of Amram, was born after Amram's death at the age of 133. We know from the Torah that Moses was 80 years of age at the time of the Exodus (cf. 7:7). This would mean that the sojourn of Egypt would have lasted 137+133+80, or 350, years—not 430 years, as Ex. 12:40 states. Where, Ibn Hazm asks, are the missing eighty years [1:158-159]?

He even anticipates the Jews' response that the figure of 430 includes Joseph's time in Egypt before his father's arrival. But still the desired total is not attained. Joseph, Ibn Hazm notes, was 17 when sold into Egypt (Gen. 37:2), and 39 when his family arrived (in that he entered Pharaoh's service at 30 [Gen. 41:46] and then seven years of plenty and two years of the seven-year famine had elapsed [Gen. 41:53, 45:11] before the Israelites' migration). That amounts to only 22 years. Where, Ibn Hazm asks, are the other 58 years needed to reach a total of 430 [1:158-159]? With similar calculations earlier in the *Treatise* [1:125-127], Ibn Hazm had shown that the prophecy purportedly made to Abraham as recorded in Gen. 15:13 ("...your descendants...will be oppressed for four hundred years") was fallacious.

Ibn Hazm wonders how in more than fifteen hundred years the Jews had not detected the arithmetical error in Numbers regarding the number of males at least one month of age in the tribe of Levi. The Gershonites are said to have numbered 6500¹⁸, the Kohathites, 8600; and the families of Merari, 6200 (Num. 3:22, 28, 34)—for a total of 21,300.

¹⁸This figure differs from that given in the MT and Vulgate (7500) and that given in the LXX (7200).

And yet Num. 3:39 gives the total as 22,000.¹⁹ Even an ox or an ass would not be so ignorant of simple arithmetic. And this erroneous figure cannot be attributed merely to the carelessness of a copyist; it is intrinsic to the text. That is, according to Num. 3:42-46, special provision had to be made for the redemption of 273 of the first-born of Israel since only 22,000 of their total number (22,273) were redeemed by the Levites [1:178-179].

Even biographical data pertaining to Moses is arithmetically inaccurate. According to Dt. 34:7, he died at the age of one hundred twenty, after having left Egypt at the age of eighty (Ex. 7:7). But the events that occurred between the exodus and Moses' death covered more than forty years, if the Torah is to be believed. Ibn Hazm sees Moses as having sojourned in the wilderness for over a year (cf. Num. 1:1) before the onset of the forty years of wandering (Num. 14:31-34); and then, after the wandering, he waged war against Og and Sihon (Num. 32:33). Thus Moses was at least one year beyond the age of one hundred twenty. Once again the forger of the Torah erred in his calculations.

4. Historical Errors

Claims made in the Torah contradict historical facts, Ibn Hazm contends. In Gen. 4:15, for example, it is promised that Cain would be ransomed sevenfold (which Ibn Hazm interprets as referring to a divine guarantee of safekeeping for seven generations). The Jews, however, hold that Cain was killed by Lamech,²⁰ who lived only five generations after him. Thus God's promise as recorded in the Torah was not historically validated [1:121].

History also contradicts the statement supposedly made by God to Abraham in Gen. 15:16, viz., that the fourth generation of Abraham's descendants would return to Canaan after having endured four hundred years of oppression in a land not their own. In actuality, it was not the fourth generation, but the sixth, that returned. In fact, it was the punishment of slavery that began with the fourth generation, not the re-entry into the land [1:124-125]. A few verses later, in Gen. 15:18, the Torah depicts God as saying that he will give Abraham's descendants the land "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates."

¹⁹The total, according to the figures given in the MT and Vulgate, is 22,300; the figures given in the LXX (7200, 8600, 6200) do add up to 22,000.

²⁰The tradition that Lamech killed Cain is not found in the Bible, Apocrypha, or Pseudepigrapha. It is, however, developed in the later *aggadah* of the Jews (see Ginzberg 1909-38, 1:116).

This never happened; the Jews never possessed all of this territory. And even if the promise is construed as referring to Abraham's descendants through Ishmael, it is still false. The area mentioned is less than one percent of the territory that God gave to them. These words therefore could not have come from God or a prophet, but rather "from someone as imbecilic as an ass, or from someone droll who entertained himself by playing with religion and corrupting the true faith" [1:129].

Furthermore, the blessing Isaac conferred upon Jacob, as recorded in the Torah (Gen. 27:27-29) is proved false by subsequent historical events. That is, Isaac tells Jacob, "Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you" (Gen. 27:29). But even according to the Torah itself, this blessing never came to fruition. It was Jacob who served Laban (Gen. 29-31). It was Jacob who bowed down before Esau (Gen. 33:3), and not *vice versa*. In speaking with Esau, Jacob refers to himself as "your servant" (Gen. 33:5). According to Gen. 36:8, it was Esau who maintained dominion over the inheritance of the sons of Jacob in Seir. In fact, Ibn Hazm notes, the sons of Jacob *never* dominated the sons of Esau, Lot or Ishmael. The Jews themselves admit that the sons of Esau and Lot retained control of Seir, Moab, and Amman even after the kingdom of Israel had disappeared. Furthermore, "until the present day" the sons of Ishmael (i.e., the Arabs) possess lands once claimed by Israel. Thus the facts of history plainly show the Torah's account of Isaac's blessing upon Jacob to be corrupt [1:139-140].

In like manner, Ibn Hazm argues that historical events belie the Torah's account of Jacob's blessing upon Ephraim and Manasseh. According to Gen. 48:14, 17-19, Jacob placed his right hand on Ephraim, the younger of the two brothers, despite their father Joseph's protest. Jacob then prophesied that Ephraim's descendants would be greater and more numerous than those of Manasseh. The Jewish texts themselves, however, contradict this prophecy. In Num. 26:34, 37²¹ it is clearly stated that the descendants of Manasseh outnumbered those of Ephraim, who totalled 52,700 and 32,500, respectively. In Judges 12:6, moreover, we are told that Jephthah decimated the Ephraimites, killing 42,000 of them. From the time of Solomon until the exile, Ephraim provided fewer rulers over the Israelites than did Manasseh. Two kings (Jeroboam and Nadab) came from the former, ruling for a total of twenty-six years (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:20, 15:28), while five kings (Jehu, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zechariah) came from the latter, ruling for a total of one hundred two years (cf. 2 Kgs. 9-14). Thus Manasseh,

²¹Ibn Hazm erroneously claims that this text is found in Joshua [1:151].

contrary to the prophecy in Gen. 48, overshadowed Ephraim not only in numbers but in greatness as well [1:151-152].

According to Gen. 49:10, Jacob, in blessing Judah, prophesied that "the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet." The falsehood of this text is incontrovertible, Ibn Hazm contends: the scepter did indeed disappear from Judah with the invasion of the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Ibn Hazm notes that in 404 A.H. (1013 C.E.), he brought this argument against Samuel ibn Nagrela, whom he considered the most learned among the Jews. Samuel responded by arguing that even in captivity the descendants of Judah continued to exercise authority over the exiles.²² Ibn Hazm was not convinced, however, retorting that the chiefs of the Jewish community never really had dominion over anyone, Jew or non-Jew [1:152]. Besides, even before the exile, the rule of the descendants of Judah was not continuous. Ibn Hazm observes that after the reign of Zechariah, son of Jeroboam, for six years there was no ruler who was a descendant of Judah (cf. 2 Kgs. 15). Likewise, after the reign of Zedekiah, who also was not a descendant of Judah, the exile began, and for seventy-two years not a single descendant of Judah ruled over the Jews until Zerubbabel, after the return from captivity (cf. Ez. 2:2; Neh. 12:1). Then shortly afterwards, the rulership of Judah definitively ended, being followed by a period of Aaronid rulership, which lasted hundreds of years. Even among the heads of the diaspora Jewish community, Ibn Hazm concludes, there are no descendants of David (Judah) "even until the present day" [1:153].²³

Moreover, in his blessing upon Levi and Simeon, Jacob prophesies that God "will divide them in Jacob and scatter them in Israel" (Gen. 49:7). History again belies the Torah. Granted, Levi's descendants were scattered among the children of Israel, having no separate heritage of their own, but not the descendants of Simeon; they remained united in their allotted territory [1:153].

History has also shown Ezekiel's prophecy that God would take vengeance upon Edom by the hand of Israel (Ez. 25:14) to be patently false. The children of Israel disappeared entirely from their land, while

the children of Esau (i.e., Edom)²⁴ continued to possess their land; only later did they disappear from the face of the earth. Then their land became the possession of the Muslims, specifically the Arabs of the tribe of Lakhm. Anticipating the response of the Jews to his criticism, Ibn Hazm concludes by saying that it is futile to argue that this text will yet be fulfilled at some time in the future [1:209].

5. Geographical Errors

Ibn Hazm also adduces a number of geographical errors in the Torah's description of the Garden of Eden. He finds three inaccuracies in Gen. 2:10-15. First, the rivers mentioned²⁵ have their sources in different locales, not in a single place (viz., Eden) [1:118]. Second, in the Abyssinian lands (the biblical Cush)²⁶ there is no river besides the Nile; no such river as the Gihon (*jayhan*) exists there. Third, the Torah states that there are pearls (*lu'lu'*) in *Zauila* (Havilah?). This is false, he argues; pearls may be found in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and China, but not in the area cited [1:119].

To be sure, the Qur'an also lists the rivers of Paradise (cf. 108:1 and 76:18), but its description is meant to be allegorical. The Jews cannot defend their text in the same way. It is obvious that the Torah in this pericope intends to provide an actual terrestrial description [1:119]. But does the Qur'an not also mention specific places, like Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj (cf. 18:83, 21:96), the locations of which are unknown? Not

²²Ibn Hazm identifies Edom with the descendants of Esau, in agreement with the biblical tradition (cf. Gen. 36:1). After the destruction of the Temple, however, Jews began to identify Esau, and therefore Edom, with Rome. See, for example, *Genesis Rabbah* 65:21 (trans. Neusner 1985, 2:399), where Esau is identified with Hadrian; and *Sifre to Deuteronomy* 41:2 (trans. Neusner 1987, 1:127), where Esau is described as "that wicked man" who "rules over then" (i.e., Rome ruling over the Jews). In medieval Spain, "Edom" meant "Christian" (see, for example, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, trans. G. Cohen 1967, 96).

²³It is interesting that several of the names cited by Ibn Hazm in his rendering of this pericope differ from those in the Hebrew and Greek. That is, Pishon of the Hebrew text is rendered as *al-nīl*, i.e., the Nile; and Havilah, Cush, and Assyria of the Hebrew text are rendered as *Zauila*, *Abyssinia* (*al-habashah*), and *Mosul* (*al-mausil*), respectively. Thus the biblical translation used by Ibn Hazm equates Cush with Abyssinia, as many earlier authors do, and Assyria with Mosul, the city built near the ruins of Nineveh, the capital of ancient Assyria. The origins of the name *Zauila* are uncertain.

²⁴According to some modern exegetes (e.g., Speiser 1964, 20), the Cush of Gen. 2:13 is not to be identified with Abyssinia but with the land of the Kassites, i.e., Mesopotamia.

²²Compare Ibn Daūd's claim in the *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* that the elite of the Jewish community of Granada were "descended from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the holy city, from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin" (trans. G. Cohen 1967, 97).

²³This verse directly contradicts the Jewish tradition that the exilarchs were descendants of David (see Bashan 1971).

so, Ibn Hazm responds. Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj were known by the Jews (biblical Gog and Magog) and described by both Aristotle and Ptolemy²⁷ [1:120].

6. Internal Contradictions

Besides the contradictions within the Jewish scriptures already discussed under the headings of arithmetical and historical errors, Ibn Hazm points to a number of others. For example, if Abel was a keeper of sheep, how is it that Jabal was the first to have livestock (cf. Gen. 4:20) [1:121]? Likewise, if the maximum age for human beings was fixed by God at one hundred twenty (cf. Gen. 6:3), how does one account for all the people who, according to the Torah, surpassed that age [1:122]?

Methuselah, according to Gen. 5:27, lived 969 years and begot his son Lamech at 187 years of age. Lamech, we are told in Gen. 5:26, begot Noah at the age of 182. That means, Ibn Hazm points out, that Methuselah was 369 years of age when Noah was born and that Noah was 600 (Ibn Hazm assumes this means that he had completed 600 years) when Methuselah died. How can it be, then, that Methuselah was not in the ark? If the flood waters began to gather in the six hundredth year of Noah's life (cf. Gen. 7:11), that is, when he was 599 years old, and he attained the age of 600 while on the ark (he left the ark in the second month of his six hundred and first year [Gen. 8:14-18]), would not Methuselah, if he lived to the age of 969 (i.e., completed 969 years) have to be saved from the flood? But, Ibn Hazm says, this was not the case; the text states that only Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives entered the ark (Gen. 7:11). Thus the text of Genesis contradicts itself [1:122-123].

Further proof that the Jews are "quite far from God and from the truth" is provided by the Torah's story of Abraham's three visitors, in which it is reported that he "took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate" (Gen. 18:8). How could this have occurred, when eating such a combination of food (i.e., meat and dairy products) is proscribed (cf. Ex. 34:26; Dt. 14:21) [1:131]?

Then, in the episode of Sodom and Gomorrah, the angelic visitors instruct Lot to tell his "sons-in-law, sons, daughters, or anyone else you have in the city" (Gen. 19:12) of the impending doom. Lot does tell his sons-in-law (Gen. 19:14), but they stayed behind and perished. This Ibn

Hazm sees as nonsensical. These sons-in-law were either impious or just. If impious, why were they told of the coming destruction, which would allow them to escape it? And if just, why did they perish? Obviously the scriptures of the Jews has been corrupted in this pericope [1:133].

Moreover, the Torah states that, because of her beauty, Sarah was twice taken into the household of a foreign ruler, first by the pharaoh of Egypt (Gen. 12:14-15) and then by Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 20:2). Now, how could Sarah be so enticing if she was as old as the Torah claims she was at the time of these events? That is, how could a ninety-year-old woman (cf. Gen. 17:17) be so beautiful as to attract such attention [1:135]?²⁸

Ibn Hazm is also perplexed by the reference to the sons of Abraham's concubines in Gen. 15:6. Why, he wants to know, is "concubine" in the plural here? The Torah depicts Abraham as having only one concubine, namely, Hagar (cf. Gen. 16:3-15). If there were others, why would they not be mentioned [1:136]?

Gen. 35:23-26 lists the twelve sons of Jacob, concluding with the assertion that "these were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram." But this statement is inconsistent with what is stated only a few verses earlier, i.e., that Benjamin was born near Ephratha (i.e., Bethlehem; cf. Gen. 35:19, Micah 5:2), not in Paddan-aram (Gen. 35:16) [1:143].

In Gen. 37:3 the Torah states that "Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children because he was the son of his old age." But then why, Ibn Hazm asks, did Israel not favor Benjamin, who was born to him some six years after Joseph? Besides, Issachar and Zebulun merited love equal to that given to Joseph because they were born at about the same time as he was. Ibn Hazm reasons as follows: According to Gen. 31:41, Jacob served Laban for twenty years (seven years before his marriage to Leah and Rachel, plus seven years afterwards, plus six years for his portion of Laban's flock). It is obvious from the text that Jacob married Leah and Rachel within a week of each other (Gen. 29:27-28). It was right after Joseph was born that Jacob made the contract with Laban to remain in his service for six more years for his portion of the flock (Gen. 30:25ff.). This means that all of Jacob's children, except Benjamin, were born in the seven-year period before

²⁷Ibn Hazm maintains that Ptolemy, in his *Geography*, actually gives the exact longitude and latitude of these places [1:120]. Asin-Palacios (1927-32, 244), however, notes that he was unable to find either this passage or the supposed reference in Aristotle's *Book of Animals*. (For a listing of geographical coordinates for Ya'jūj and Ma'jūj given in Islamic sources, see Kennedy and Kennedy 1987, 377.)

²⁸The rabbis were aware of this difficulty as well, and their response was that Sarah's beauty never diminished, not even with age and extensive travelling. Like all the most beautiful women of every generation, she had had the "model of the beauty of Eve" bestowed upon her (*Genesis Rabbah* 40:4-5 [trans. Neusner 1985, 2:81-82]).

this agreement was made. Since no more than one child could be born to Leah every ten months, and since it is clear that Jacob did not continuously cohabit with her (in that he cohabited at different times with Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah as well; cf. Gen. 29:28-30, 30:1-13), obviously Issachar and Zebulon were also children of Jacob's old age, differing little in age from Joseph. Given these data from the text, Ibn Hazm concludes that Zebulon was only about a year older than Joseph and Issachar only two years or less. And depending on the length of the break in Jacob's cohabitation with Leah, it is quite possible that Zebulon and Joseph were born at the same time. So why should Joseph be favored over him as the "son of Jacob's old age" [1:143-144]?

Ibn Hazm also draws attention to the discrepancies between the list of the sons of Benjamin given in Gen. 46:21 and that given in Num. 26:38-41. Obviously both cannot be correct [1:151].

The Torah's account of several of the plagues also contains contradictions. Consider, for example, the story of the conversion of water into blood (Ex. 7:19-24). The text states that Aaron, at Moses' behest, raised his rod and all the waters of Egypt, whether in rivers, streams, ponds, pools, or vessels of wood and stone, became blood. Now, Ibn Hazm argues, how was it possible for the Egyptian magicians to repeat this action, as the Torah claims (Ex. 7:22), if all the water had already been transformed? Besides, how would the people of Egypt have been able to survive if deprived of all water [1:156]? Similarly, if all the cattle of Egypt died as a result of the plague (Ex. 9:6), how were there any cattle left to perish later as a result of the plagues of boils (Ex. 9:9-10) and hail (Ex. 9:19ff.)? One cannot argue that the livestock mentioned in conjunction with these later plagues had been brought in from elsewhere to replace those already destroyed. According to the text, the plagues of boils and hail took place only a few days after the plague on the livestock; there would have been no time to transfer cattle from another territory [1:158].

In Num. 11, the Torah tells us that during their desert wandering, the people lamented that they had no meat to eat. Ibn Hazm charges that such an account contradicts the Torah's earlier testimony that the Israelites had left Egypt with all their cattle (Ex. 12:38), which apparently were quite numerous. After all, each family was able to sacrifice an animal on the night of the Passover (Ex. 12:35). The requisite sacrifices at the tabernacle presupposed an abundance of livestock. Moreover, we are told that Reuben and Gad had "a very great multitude of cattle" (Num. 32:1). What need, then, did the Israelites have of the quails discussed in Num. 11:31ff. [1:181-182]?

Even details in the Torah regarding such an important figure as Moses are contradictory. Ex. 2:21 clearly indicates that he married the daughter of Jethro the Midianite, but Num. 12:1 claims that he married an Abyssinian ("Cushite") woman [1:183].²⁹

The conclusion of the Torah presents the contradiction *par excellence*. The Jews maintain that Moses wrote the Torah. If that is so, how can one explain Dt. 34:5-12, the passage describing the death of Moses. Certainly Moses could not have written it! These verses are perfect proof that the Torah was altered by another and represents little more than a story resulting from his ignorance or imagination. The phrase "until this day" in Dt. 34:6 clearly shows that the Torah was compiled at a time much later than Moses³⁰ [1:186].

But such contradictions are not limited to the Torah. In the book of Joshua (7:18-26), for instance, we are told that Achan had kept for himself a number of items (a mantle, silver, gold) that should have been destroyed since they had been placed under ban. Such an action merited punishment. Joshua ordered that he *and his children* and his cattle were to be killed. Such an action is specifically prohibited in the Torah: Dt. 24:26 forbids that "children be put to death for the fathers." The Jews either have to admit that this earlier law was abrogated (which they refuse to do) or to admit that there is a contradiction here [1:204-205].

7. Absurdities and Impossibilities

Ibn Hazm charges that the Torah also contains passages which are patently absurd, often because they describe situations that are impossible according to nature.

Num. 26:51, for example, maintains that 601,730 men over twenty years of age entered the land of Canaan, and it was among them that the conquered territory was to be distributed as booty. In 2 Samuel it is stated further that during David's reign there were in Judah alone five hundred thousand soldiers; Ibn Hazm speculates that in the other nine tribes (excluding the tribes of Levi and Benjamin from the count), there

²⁹Some modern exegetes, however, consider "Cushan" to be another name for Midian; note that they are used in parallel construction in Hab. 3:7 (Robertson 1990, 227-228).

³⁰Elsewhere [1:204] Ibn Hazm uses a similar argument against the authenticity of the book of Joshua. He adduces a pericope (not found in the MT, LXX, or Vulgate) to the effect that "he arrived at Dusharac, king of Bius, in which Solomon built the Holy House." If the book were authentic, how could it make reference to an individual who was not to be born for some six hundred years? It cannot be argued that the reference is prophecy, since this pericope is not of the prophetic genre. Thus the book of Joshua is a forgery coming from a later period.

must have been approximately one million—and neither of these figures take females or males under the age of twenty into account.³¹ In reflecting on these data, Ibn Hazm asks whether it was physically possible for so great a number of people to live in so restricted an area as Palestine [1:165]. In support of his doubt, he gives a detailed geographical analysis of the territory, concluding that land of such limited extent and of such pronounced aridity could not possibly have supported so many people as the Jewish scriptures maintain. How much more realistic is the Qur'an's depiction of the Israelites who left Egypt as "but a puny band" (26:55) [1:166-167]!

Similarly, Ibn Hazm tallies the number of cities in each of the tribal territories as given in Jos. 13-19, arriving at a total of four hundred.³² In such a tiny and poor land it would be impossible for such a large number of cities (not to mention villages) to exist [1:167-168].

Besides these texts there are "others still more abominable through their evident falsehoods and repulsive absurdities, which obviously show themselves to have been forged ... with absolute impudence" [1:168]. Consider, for example, the census figures given in Num. 1-2. These, Ibn Hazm contends, are wildly exaggerated, especially since they were purportedly compiled only one year and one month after the exodus (Num. 1:1). The number of able-bodied men in the tribe of Dan is said to have been 72,700³³ when they left Egypt (Num. 1:38); and all of them were supposedly descended from a single son of Dan, Hushim (cf. Gen. 46:23). Obviously, this is impossible. Likewise, the number of able-bodied men of Ephraim and Manasseh is said to have grown to 72,700 within only four generations³⁴ from their common ancestor Joseph. Is this reasonable, given that Ephraim had no more than three

sons and Manasseh no more than two? How much more absurd do these figures become when one remembers that they reflect only those males twenty years of age and older. If females and younger males were to be included, the total number of Dan's descendants (through his only son and within a period of only 217 years³⁵) would approach 160,000—an impossibility "given the natural laws of constitution and growth" [1:173]. The same argumentation can be brought against the census figure for Israel as a whole reported in the Torah. Jacob's sons produced fifty-one male offspring; if there were others, the Torah fails to mention them. It is not possible that in a period of only 217 years, through only these fifty-one men, some 603,000 males at least twenty years of age could have been produced; this would mean that the total number of Jacob's descendants (i.e., including female and younger males) by this time would have approached two million [1:173]! Such factors as miscarriage, infant mortality, the usual time between pregnancies, and difficulties in conceiving and nourishing children would militate against such a rapid expansion of the Israelite population [1:175]. Such explosive growth would have required a fertility unknown throughout human history. It is rare, Ibn Hazm claims, that anyone, whether among Muslims, Christians, Slavs, Turks, Indians, or Sudanese, whether in the past or in the present, would have as many as twenty children. In only very rare cases (fewer than twenty in approximately three thousand years, he asserts³⁶) did people engender thirty or more children. In any case, such fecundity assumes a comfortable, if not luxurious, style of life, something which the Israelites, who lived in markedly abject conditions, did not enjoy either in Egypt or during the exodus [1:175-177].

³¹2 Sam. 24:9 states that "in Israel there were eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand."

³²Ibn Hazm miscalculates the total. Adding together the number of cities he says were in Judah (104), Simeon (17), Benjamin (28), Zebulun (12), Naphthali (19), and Dan (18), he comes up with subtotal of 238 cities; in actuality the sum is 198. When one adds to this subtotal the number of cities of Manasseh east of the Jordan (60), plus the 100 or so cities held by Reuben, Gad, Ephraim, and Manasseh west of the Jordan, the total number of cities is approximately 360, not 400, as Ibn Hazm claims. Nevertheless, this error in addition does not invalidate his argument; the total number of cities is still unrealistically large.

³³The MT, LXX, and Vulgate say 62,700.

³⁴On the basis of Gen. 15:13, 16 (where Abraham is told that "...your descendants ... will be oppressed for four hundred years ..., and they shall come back here in the fourth generation"), Ibn Hazm holds that the Torah teaches that only four generations passed between the descent into Egypt and the exodus. Even though he earlier rejected this prophecy as contradictory to historical evidence [cf. 1:124-125], he accepts it here because the assumption of its accuracy strengthens his argument.

³⁵Ibn Hazm argues that the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt lasted 217 years. Recall that earlier (see Section B.3, above) he disputed the Torah's claim that the sojourn lasted 430 years. At most, he said, it lasted 350. But even this total is too large. It assumes that Kohath was but a month old when he entered Egypt, that Amram was born the year of Kohath's death, and that Moses was born in the year of Amram's death. Such was not the case. The books of the Jews teach, according to Ibn Hazm, that Kohath entered Egypt at age 3, that Amram was born to him when he was 60, and that Amram was 80 when Moses was born. [The sources of these figures are uncertain. Aggadic materials indicate that Kohath was about 60 when Amram was married, not born (cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, 2:197), and that Amram was approximately 130 when Moses was born (cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, 2:261-263).] Thus, 3+60+80 (=143) should be subtracted from the figure of 350, thus giving 207 years as the length of the sojourn. Ibn Hazm, however, subtracts incorrectly (assuming that the incorrect figure is not a textual corruption), and calculates a difference of 217 [1:126].

³⁶Ibn Hazm discusses these cases in considerable detail, giving names, lineage, country of origin, and number of progeny [1:175-176].

Besides the number of Israelites it claims participated in the exodus, the Torah propounds a number of other absurdities regarding Israel's experience in Egypt. Is it realistic, Ibn Hazm asks, to think that all the Israelites in Egypt lived in Goshen, as the Torah maintains (Gen. 47:3-7) or that their sole means of support was raising livestock? If, as the Torah states, over 600,000 Israelites (not counting women and children) left Egypt, one can only imagine how many heads of livestock would be necessary to support such a huge population. All of Egypt could not provide enough pasturage for them, let alone the limited area of Goshen. Furthermore, is it not absurd to maintain, as the Torah does (cf. Ex. 1:14), that this huge number of Israelites concentrated in Goshen were all engaged in the same task, viz., the making of bricks [1:177]?

The Torah's account of the constitution of the Israelite community after the exodus focuses largely on the role of the Levites. And yet, Ibn Hazm argues, data concerning the Levites are untenable. For instance, he finds the claim that the Levites numbered 22,000 males one month of age and older (Num. 3:39), of whom 8,580 (Num. 4:48) were between the ages of thirty and fifty, to be preposterous. Levi produced three sons (Gershon, Kohath, and Merari), who, in turn, produced eight sons in all. Is it possible that from these eight grandsons of Levi, in the span of only several generations, 22,000 male offspring (not to mention female offspring) could be produced [1:177]?

Ibn Hazm specifically examines the case of the Kohathite clan, to which Moses and Aaron belonged. Kohath had four sons (Amram, Izeah, Hebron and Uzziel) (Num. 3:19). Amram produced two sons (Moses and Aaron) and six grandsons (Moses' two sons and Aaron's four, all of whom were still young at the time of the Exodus). Thus, of the total of 8,600 male offspring attributed to the Kohathites, Amram's line contributed only eight. It is utterly impossible that the lines of Izeah, Hebron, and Uzziel produced all of the rest! (All of this procreation would have had to occur in a timespan of only two or three generations since Elizaphan, the son of Uzziel, was apparently still alive at the time of the writing of Numbers [cf. 3:30].) The claims of the Torah in these matters, Ibn Hazm concludes, amount to a "stupidity without equal, an impudence of the highest degree, a sheer and obvious lie, an absurdity that reaches the highest level of impossibility, and something akin to the tales told in nocturnal conversation" [1:178].

In the same vein, one must ask whether it is reasonable to assume that the descendants of Aaron, within a year and some months after his death, could populate no less than thirteen cities, as the book of Joshua claims (21:4, 19). Anyone who would assent to such an absurd notion

is, according to Ibn Hazm, guilty of an imbecility worthy of chains, manacles, lashes, and captivity—i.e., precisely the fate that befell the Jews [1:178]!

Another notorious lie of the Jews is their claim that 666 years elapsed between the exodus and the reign of David.³⁷ This is simply impossible. By divine decree, no one twenty years of age or older was to enter Canaan except Joshua and Caleb (Num. 14:26-30). Now, Nahson, the brother of Aaron's wife, was leader of the people of Judah at the time of the exodus (Num. 2:3). He himself died in the desert, but his son Salmon, an ancestor of David, entered Canaan. Four generations passed until the birth of David (Salmon was the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David [cf. Ruth 4:21-22, Mt. 1:5-6]). David began his reign at the age of thirty-three. Thus the time from the exodus to the birth of David would be, according to the Jews, 666 minus 33, or 633, years.³⁸ This means that all these years would have to be divided among only three generations, thus making generations of absurdly long duration. Imagine how old, Ibn Hazm says, each of David's ancestors would have been when his son was born. This contradicts the assertion in the books of the Jews that after Moses no one except Jehoiada (2 Chron. 24:15) lived to be 130 years of age; each of David's ancestors would have had to be over 140 when his son was born! Here we have yet another indication that the books of the Jews were altered, forged, and falsified [1:179-180].

Still another impossibility is to be found in the accounts of the amount of gold Solomon was able to collect during one year of his reign. 1 Kgs. 10:14 and 2 Chron. 9:13 give the amount as 636,000 talents, certainly more than all the people living under his dominion could render. Such a fantastic account is obviously the work of rabbinic forgers who, according to Ibn Hazm, were stupid in arithmetic and had little shame [1:219].

Likewise impossible are the Jewish tales that each year Solomon's table required the slaughter of 11,500 bulls, more than 36,000 sheep, and countless deer and game animals. A supply of 6000 measures of bread is said to have been used annually.³⁹ Small as it was, the land of the Israelites could not possibly have produced such provisions, not to

³⁷Ibn Hazm's source for this figure has not been identified. The MT and Vulgate say 480 years elapsed in this period from the exodus to the dedication of the Temple; the LXX, 440 years (1 Kings 6:1).

³⁸Ibn Hazm subtracts incorrectly (assuming the erroneous figure is not a textual corruption), giving the difference as 573 [1:180].

³⁹It is not clear where Ibn Hazm got these figures. They are undoubtedly based on the account given in 1 Kgs. 4:22-23 and probably reflect midrashic exaggeration.

mention the huge amounts of wheat and olive oil Solomon supposedly gave to Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Kgs. 5:11)! The Jews also maintain that Solomon's palace had one hundred tables of gold, upon each of which were one hundred golden plates and three hundred golden trays; and upon each tray were three hundred golden goblets.⁴⁰ "What stupid falsehoods!" Ibn Hazm exclaims, absurdities untenable arithmetically and geometrically. Such tables would have been so ridiculously large and heavy that only an elephant could have budged them. It is true, Ibn Hazm admits, that the Qur'an attributes marvelous abilities to Solomon (e.g., his knowledge of the language of birds [27:16], his ability to control the winds [21:81, 34:12], and his power over the *jinn* [27:17, 34:12]),⁴¹ but these are in the realm of the miraculous, beyond natural laws. What the Jews attribute to him are subject to the laws of the cosmos and hence are impossible [1:219-220].

Furthermore, the Jews are so bold as to attribute to Solomon a text like the Song of Songs, which should, Ibn Hazm avers, be called "Folly of Follies." It is so foolish and unintelligible that not even the Jews can explain its purpose. At times it compliments a male, at other times a female. At certain points, according to Ibn Hazm, there flows from it "a viscous phlegm," like that which flows from someone whose brain has decayed [1:207].⁴²

Also absurd is the Torah's claim that Asa, king of Judah, with a force of soldiers from Judah and Benjamin, routed the army of Zerah, king of Ethiopia, which consisted of a million men (1 Chron. 14:9-15). So many soldiers could never have been moved so great a distance (from Ethiopia to Jerusalem) through deserts! Why, Ibn Hazm asks, would the Ethiopians even want to conquer a nation so far from it? Besides, Abyssinia is a country of sparse population. How could such an army even be raised there [1:220-221]?

Ibn Hazm also points to the absurdity of selected post-biblical texts of the Jews. A text of Rabbi Eliezer, for instance, teaches that Dinah, after being raped by Shechem, conceived and bore a daughter, whom an eagle snatched up into the air, carrying her away and letting her fall into the breast of Joseph, who then brought her up and married

⁴⁰These descriptions of Solomon's wealth probably derive from a midrash based on 1 Kgs. 10.

⁴¹Interestingly enough, these same abilities are attributed to Solomon in Jewish legends; cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, 4:138, 144.

⁴²Because of his literalist, Zahiri views (see Chapter I.C., above), Ibn Hazm rejected the sort of allegorical interpretation of Song of Songs propounded by Jewish and Christian commentators.

her.⁴³ Moreover, in commenting on Gen. 49:21, one of their books maintains that Jacob called Naphtali a "hind sent" because he travelled the distance between the town of Abraham (near Jerusalem) to Memphis in only one hour – an impossibility, since this trip would take twenty days or so⁴⁴ [1:218].

Similarly, in commenting on Num. 25:6-15, according to which Zimri was slain by Phinehas for taking a Midianite woman as wife, the Talmud⁴⁵ says that Phinehas pierced both through with his lance, lifting them up like birds on a spit. According to Ibn Hazm, one of their most respected rabbis said that the woman's coccyx was as large as a field in which a measure of mustard could be sown. Yet another of their books⁴⁶ states that Pharaoh's beard was seven hundred fathoms long! What a disgraceful people," Ibn Hazm concludes, "who take their sacred books and religion from teachers who teach such imbecilic things!" [1:219].

Finally, Ibn Hazm finds the law given in Lev. 20:20 incomprehensible. In the version he cites, it reads, "Whoever lies with his paternal or maternal uncle's wife or uncovers the nakedness of his daughter, both bear their sins and will die childless."⁴⁷ The meaning of this law is unclear, Ibn Hazm argues, and what good is an incomprehensible law [1:165]?

8. Divine Anthropomorphism and Inappropriate Imaging of God

Ibn Hazm takes strong exception to the way the Jewish scriptures depict God in corporeal and anthropomorphic terms. He also charges that the Jews use inappropriate imagery in speaking of God.

⁴³This is at variance with what *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 38 states: "He (Jacob) wrote the Holy Name upon a golden plate, and suspended it about her (Asenath's, i.e., Dinah's daughter's) neck and sent her away. She went her way. Everything is revealed before the Holy One, blessed be He, and Michael the angel descended and took her, and brought her down to Egypt to the house of Potiphera; because Asenath was destined to become the wife of Joseph. Now the wife of Potiphera was barren, and (Asenath) grew up with her as a daughter. When Joseph came down to Egypt he married her...." (trans. Friedlander 1916, 288; see also Aptowitzer 1924).

⁴⁴The legends regarding the swiftness of Naphtali are highly developed in Jewish lore. See, for example, Ginzberg 1909-38, 2:108-109, 154, 209; cf. *Genesis Rabbah* 98:17 (trans. Neusner 1985, 3:367).

⁴⁵Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 82b.

⁴⁶The text to which Ibn Hazm alludes here has not been identified.

⁴⁷The MT reads: "If a man lies with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They shall bear their sin; they shall die childless."

The flaw of anthropomorphism manifests itself early in the Torah, when Adam is depicted as being created in God's image and likeness (Gen. 1:26). Although he thinks that one can acceptably speak of the "image of God" in relation to things in creation (in the sense that the things that God creates are his images, i.e., images he has formed in the act of creating), Ibn Hazm objects to the use of the word "likeness" in this passage. It implies that God's form is like Adam's form, i.e., that God is anthromorphic [1:117-118].⁴⁸

Even more graphic is the divine anthropomorphism presented in Gen. 18:1-8, the story of Abraham's three heavenly visitors. This pericope opens with the declaration that the Lord appeared to Abraham. And yet the story tells of the appearance of three men. Objectionable in itself, this description can be faulted further for lending support to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (*tathlith*).⁴⁹ If the Jews try to defend their text by saying that the three men were angels and not God, several absurdities result. As already noted, the text clearly states that it was God who appeared to Abraham (Gen. 18:1). In his dialogue with the visitors, Abraham addresses them as *one* person (cf. Gen. 18:3), as one would address God, not as a multiplicity of persons. Furthermore, Abraham adores them, rendering worship to them in a way that is due only to God; that is, he bows down and refers to himself as "thy servant" (Gen. 18:2-3). But if one admits that it is God who came to Abraham, other absurdities arise. For instance, would God (or an angel, for that matter) need to wash his feet or to eat bread (Gen. 18:4-5)? Would God (or an angel) eat and drink as these guests did (Gen. 18:8)? This is indeed a corrupt text, unlike the Qur'an (11:72-73), which clearly states that the visitors (who are certainly angels and not God) did not even touch the calf Abraham had prepared for them [1:130-131]. The same absurdities are repeated in the Torah's description of the visitors' entry into Sodom; here again they are depicted as having their feet washed and as eating, this time in the home of Lot (Gen. 19:1-3) [1:132].

So horrified is Ibn Hazm at the enormity of the Torah's account of Jacob's wrestling with God (Gen. 32:22-32) that he feels obliged to justify

⁴⁸Cf. Maimonides' treatment of this issue in *Guide of the Perplexed* i,1 (trans. Pines 1963, 21-23). He concludes that "it was ... because of the divine intellect conjoined with man, that it is said of the latter that he is in the image of God and in His likeness, not that God, may He be exalted, is a body and possesses a shape" (23).

⁴⁹In fact, what the Jews depict in this story of Abraham's visitors is, according to Ibn Hazm, worse than the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. While the Christians hold to the designation (*ishukhis*) of three persons within one God, the Torah actually presents three separate individuals (*shukhis*). Such a doctrinal aberration is "the consummation of shame" [1:130].

even mentioning it; the contents of this passage must be presented, he maintains, only so that they can be refuted. How could the Jews be so bold as to depict God as wrestling with a human being? Where is God's majesty and glory? Where is his freedom from all similarity to his creatures? How could he participate in so frivolous an activity as a pugilistic game?

What is more, the Jews in this text imply that God was limited in his power, not being able to prevail against Jacob. "You have striven with God ... and prevailed," the text reads (Gen. 32:28). And the Jews' usual defense—that it was not God but an angel with whom Jacob wrestled—is rejected on linguistic grounds. He points out that the name given to Jacob as a result of this incident, viz., Israel, clearly contains a reference to God ("El") and actually means the "capture" (*asr*) of God. Besides, after this episode Jacob exclaimed, "I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30). In this passage the Torah obviously contradicts not only the incorporeality of God but also his omnipotence⁵⁰ [1:142].

Anthropomorphisms are evident elsewhere in the Torah as well. God is called a "man of war" (Ex. 15:1-3), and his corporeality is clearly implied when it is said that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders saw God on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:9-11); Ex. 24:22 even refers specifically to a divine body part, i.e., God's hand: "And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel" [1:160-161, 164-165]. God is said to have spoken to Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex. 33:11). According to the Torah, Moses is placed in a cleft of a rock and covered with God's hand as God passes before him. Once God removes his hand, Moses is allowed to see God's back, but not his face (Ex. 33:18-23).⁵¹

Moreover, God is depicted physically as fire: "Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel" (Ex. 24:17). Dt. 9:3 describes

⁵⁰Ibn Hazm anticipates the Jewish response to his objections. It is true, he admits that Muhammad engaged in wrestling (cf. *Sint Rasul Allah*; trans. Guillaume 1955, 178), but Islamic tradition clearly holds that he wrestled not with God but with a human being, viz., Rukana, who promised to convert to Islam if Muhammad was able to throw him.

⁵¹Ibn Hazm also objects to the Jews' depiction of God as an old man with white head and white beard. He erroneously claims that such a description is found in Isaiah [1:209]. Perhaps he alludes here to Dn. 7:9 ("And one that was ancient of days took his seat; his raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool") or to a passage from the pseudepigrapha, 1 Enoch 46:1 ("And there I saw One who had a head of days, and his head was white like wool" [trans. Charles 1913, 2:214]).

him as a "devouring fire" who will cross the Jordan ahead of Israel. Are such material characterizations of God appropriate [1:160-161]?

To be sure, the Qur'an also describes God in ways that, at first glance, seem physical. But on closer examination, Ibn Hazm contends, the Qur'anic passages do not contradict the cardinal doctrine of divine incorporeality as do those in the Torah. For instance, Sura 24:35 states that God is "the light of the heavens and the earth.... His light may be compared to a niche which enshrines a lamp, the lamp within a crystal of star-like brilliance." This light, however, should not be understood in any physical sense. Rather, Ibn Hazm argues, it is to be understood as a metaphor of God's grace, by which he directs the inhabitants of heaven and earth, much as the light of a lamp guides those in darkness. Here one created thing (grace) is simply being likened to another (light). Such comparisons attribute no corporeality to God [1:160].

Neither do such Qur'anic texts as 29:22 and 2:210. In the former, God is described as coming down with his angels, rank upon rank; in the latter, as coming down in canopies of clouds. In the same vein, one of the *hadiths* reports that Muhammad taught that God comes down from heaven to earth during the last third of each night. These texts can be taken literally; no allegorical interpretation is necessary.³² They simply state that God descends from heaven; this in itself does not entail the attribution of a body to God. Even such passages as 55:27 ("the face of your Lord will abide forever") need not be interpreted allegorically. Ibn Hazm's view is that these passages do not teach the existence of corporeal members or organs of God; literally interpreted, they refer to nothing which is not God himself (*la yarji'u bihay'i min dhalika ila siwahu aslan*) [1:161].

Even in later, post-biblical texts, the Jews continue to depict God in anthropomorphic and physical ways. In one rabbinic text, for instance, it is said that the two images on the ark of the covenant (apparently in place of the cherubim described in Ex. 25:18-20, 33:7-9) represented God and Moses.³³ Ibn Hazm assails the mystical doctrine of *shi'ur qomah* (meaning "measure of the body"), according to which God has a measurable corporeal form. In a text bearing the name of the doctrine (a text which Ibn Hazm erroneously says is part of the Talmud),³⁴ the length of the Creator's forehead is given as five thousand

cubits! It is blasphemous, Ibn Hazm says, to attribute form, extension, and limits to God in this way. Likewise blasphemous is the Talmud's assertion (according to Ibn Hazm, in *Seder Nashim*) that the crown on the head of the Creator is made of gold and weighs one thousand quintals and that the stone of the ring on his finger holds the light of the sun and the stars.³⁵ "God is above such things!" Ibn Hazm protests [1:221].

9. Shirk and Divine Filiation

Not only do the Jewish scriptures contradict the true doctrine of God through their use of anthropomorphisms and inappropriate imagery; they also attribute associates to God, thus committing the heinous sin of *shirk* (cf. Qur'an 4:48, 4:116, 31:13, 34:22, 35:40), and suggest that he begot offspring.

Perhaps the most obvious example of *shirk* in the Torah is found in Gen. 3:22-23, where God says of Adam, "Behold, the man has become like one of us," thus implying the existence of a multiplicity of gods. Furthermore, Ibn Hazm complains, this passage has led some Jews to believe that the one who created Adam was himself a creature who, having been made by God before Adam, had managed to eat of the tree of life [1:120].

The notion of divine filiation is introduced in Genesis by the description of the Nephilim, who supposedly were engendered by the "sons of God," who had taken wives from among the daughters of men (Gen. 6:1-4). Ibn Hazm considers it a stupidity to suppose that God had sons who then had intercourse with women; he, after all, is infinitely above parenting³⁶ [1:121].

It is the book of Psalms, however, that most egregiously promotes the ideas of *shirk* and divine filiation. Consider, for example, Ps. 2:7, which states, "He [God] said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you.'" In making such a statement, Ibn Hazm notes, the Jews are no better than the Christians, with their doctrine of Christ as the Son of God. Even worse than what the Christians teach is the statement

was known and discussed among Spanish Jewry. It is defended by Judah Halevi and Abraham ibn Ezra and criticized by Maimonides (Scholem 1965a, 36-42; cf. ed. Charlesworth 1983, 1:136-137 [2 Enoch]).

³²Despite Ibn Hazm's claim, no such reference is found in any tractate of *Seder Nashim*.

³³Ibn Hazm finds Philo's interpretation of this text (according to which the "sons of God" were angels) to be less offensive than a literal interpretation. Nevertheless, Ibn Hazm considers the narrative to be a lie, no matter how it is interpreted [1:121].

³²This avoidance of allegorical interpretation is consistent with Ibn Hazm's *Zahir* convictions (see Chapter 1.C, above).

³³The source of this citation has not been identified.

³⁴A number of fragmentary Hebrew texts bear this title. It is not clear which one Ibn Hazm claims to cite. It is certain, however, that the doctrine of *shi'ur qomah*

made in Ps. 82:6 that "you are sons of God";⁵⁷ at least the Christians recognize only one divine offspring, not a multiplicity of them [1:205]!

The text of Ps. 45 is especially troublesome to Ibn Hazm. He sees it as referring not to an earthly king but to God. He therefore flinches at v. 7, which states that "God, your God has anointed you." He interprets these words as teaching the existence of a god besides God, a god who anointed God. God would therefore have an associate! Furthermore, in vv. 10-12, the king (God, in Ibn Hazm's view) invites a woman to be his consort: "Your wife stood at your right, and her trains were of gold. Hear, O daughter, and incline your ear and hearken, and forget your family and the home of your father, and the king will desire you; and he is the Lord and God, so adore him willingly."⁵⁸ Muslims, says Ibn Hazm, deny that God has any sons, and yet in this text the Jews ascribe a wife and sisters to him!⁵⁹ [1:205-206]!

The Jews again outdo the Christians in *shirk* by their allusion to God's taking his place in the council of the gods, in the midst of whom he pronounces judgment (Ps. 82:1). The Christians, Ibn Hazm stresses, have only three gods; this verse indicates that the Jews posit the existence of a whole congregation of them! Ps. 89:6-7 seems to teach the same: "Who is like God among the sons of God?" To the error of *shirk* in these verses is added the error of filiation in vv. 26-27, in which David is described as crying out, "Thou art my father," to which God responds, "And I will make him the first-born of my sons"⁶⁰ [1:206-207].

Just as Ibn Hazm cannot believe that David⁶¹ was the source of the texts teaching *shirk* and divine filiation in the Psalms, he cannot accept that Solomon was responsible for the discourse on Wisdom in Prov. 8. The latter pericope, like the former texts, were obviously forged by people "who had deviated from the true religion." After all, could Solomon, a prophet of God, have taught that Wisdom existed with God

⁵⁷This is the text as Ibn Hazm cites it. The MT, LXX, and Vulgate read, "You are gods, and all of you sons of the Most High."

⁵⁸This is the text as Ibn Hazm gives it. In the RSV it reads: "At your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear. Forget your people and your father's house; and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your Lord, bow to him."

⁵⁹It is not clear what is meant when Ibn Hazm speaks of "sisters of God" here. It is likely that, since he considers God to be speaking in Ps. 44:11, he sees the expression "O daughter" as referring to God's daughter, who would be the sister of the "sons of God."

⁶⁰In this passage, the MT, LXX, and Vulgate say only "first-born," without the additional phrase "of my sons" cited here by Ibn Hazm.

⁶¹Jewish, Christian, and Muslim tradition considered David to be the author of the book of Psalms. Moreover, the Qur'an (4:163) ascribes prophethood to David.

—as an associate—at the creation of the world (cf. Prov. 8:22-31)? And one cannot explain away this obvious example of *shirk* by maintaining, as one Jew did, that Wisdom is to be understood as the knowledge of God, not a being distinct from him. Such an interpretation, Ibn Hazm objects, is not acceptable; it does not reflect what the text says. One cannot, without sufficient reason, give to the words of this passage a sense they simply do not have [1:208].⁶²

The text of the prophecy of Isaiah is also tainted by the false doctrine of divine filiation. Ibn Hazm cites Is. 66:9 ("Shall not I that make others to bring forth children, myself bring forth, saith the Lord? Shall I that give generation to others be barren, saith the Lord thy God?").⁶³ He is appalled by the text's depiction of God as comparing himself with his creatures who beget children. This surpasses the effrontery of the Christians, who ascribe co-participants in God's divinity, namely, a son and a wife.⁶⁴ [1:209]

Finally, Ibn Hazm assails the Jewish doctrine regarding Metatron, whom he says the Jews worship as "the little Lord."⁶⁵ Through this doctrine the Jews make sport of God and scorn his precepts. They maintain that on the night of Yom Kippur, Metatron rises, pulls his hair,

⁶²Ibn Hazm also cites a text from Ecclesiastes ("The Synagogues," as he calls the book) in order to bolster his argument regarding the corruption of the Jewish scriptures. This text, which promotes the idea of divine filiation is not found, however, in the MT, LXX, or Vulgate. It reads, according to his citation as follows: "Choose a prince [O God] from your people and a judge for your sons and daughters" [208].

⁶³Ibn Hazm here cites neither the MT nor the LXX but the Vulgate. The translation given here is from the Douay Version.

⁶⁴Apparently the "wife" to whom he refers here is the Virgin Mary, perhaps reflecting the depiction of Mary as the "bride of God" in popular Christian devotion. Consider, for example, the Akathist Hymn, a Byzantine Christian devotional text in honor of the Virgin Mary (see Nassar 1961 [1938], 702-718). In this work, Mary is repeatedly hailed as "bride without bridegroom," i.e., as bride of God without human consort.

⁶⁵Metatron features prominently in Jewish esoteric doctrine. The origin of his name is uncertain. In the Babylonian Talmud he is mentioned in three places: Hagigah 15a, Sanhedrin 38b, and Abodah Zarah 3b. In the first, to show that he was not a second deity to be worshipped (apparently an opinion popular enough to be challenged), he is given sixty lashes. In the second, he is said to be the angel to whom God says in Ex. 23:21 "my name is in him." Here too one of the rabbis (R. Idith) argues against rendering worship to Metatron. Some authors (among them the Karaites al-Qirṣānī) charge that this passage from *Sanhedrin* describes Metatron as "the lesser Lord (YHWH)." (Whether this claim is based on an actual textual variant or merely represents a polemical assertion without textual basis is unknown.) It is this designation of "lesser Lord" that Ibn Hazm attacks, perhaps drawing on a Karaite polemical source. The third Talmudic reference to Metatron mentions him once in passing as the one who instructs school children. (For a detailed examination of the significance of Metatron in Jewish lore, see Scholem 1965a:43-55. See also ed. Charlesworth 1983, 1:223, 226-230, 232, 240, 256-259, 261-315, 866.)

and cries out repeatedly, "Woe is me! Why did I ruin my house and leave my sons and daughters orphans and put down the head of my people? I will not get up until my house is rebuilt and I make my sons and daughters return to her!"⁶⁶ It is to this "little Lord" that the Jews dedicate the first ten days of October,⁶⁷ Ibn Hazm charges. This amounts to explicit polytheism, a polytheism worse than that of the Christians. And the Jews' protest that Metatron is only an angel and not another god is to no avail: If that were so, Ibn Hazm asks, how does he, in the aforementioned lament, speak of "my house" and being separated from "my sons and daughters"? It was God who ordered the destruction of the Temple, was it not? And if one argues, as certain Jews do, that it was Metatron who executed the destruction by God's order, how could he, as one of God's angels, repent of his fulfillment of the divine command [1:223]? With regard to Metatron, the rabbis fall into two groups: those who belittle, revile, and affront God by saying Metatron is God, and those who say he is another god besides God [1:224]. In either case, the rabbis—and their books—clearly deviate from the truth.

10. Faulty Transmission

Perhaps the most sophisticated argument Ibn Hazm brings against the integrity of the Torah is the charge that the original, unadulterated revelation to Moses could not have been transmitted accurately.

Preservation of the integrity of the sacred texts throughout the centuries would have required consistent fidelity to God and scrupulous compliance with his will. Did the Jews manifest these necessary traits? Did their historical experiences enable them to do so? To answer these questions, Ibn Hazm traces the history of Israel from the time of the conquest through the post-exilic period, drawing material from the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2

⁶⁶This depiction seems to be based on the following text from *Lamentations Rabbah* 24: "At that time the enemy entered the Temple and burnt it. When it was burnt, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'I no longer have a dwelling-place in this land; I will withdraw My *Shechinah* from it and ascend to My former habitation'.... At that time the Holy One, blessed be He, wept and said, 'Woe is Me! What have I done? I caused My *Shechinah* to dwell below on earth for the sake of Israel; but now that they have sinned, I have returned to my former habitation. Heaven forbid that I become a laughter to the nations and a byword to human beings!' At that time Metatron came, fell upon his face, and spake before the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe, let me weep, but do Thou not weep'.... (trans. A. Cohen 1939, 41).

⁶⁷Apparently Ibn Hazm refers here to the Ten Days of Repentance ending with Yom Kippur; see note 16, above.

Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and 1 and 2 Maccabees, as well as from various midrashic sources.

The thrust of Ibn Hazm's argument is this: Those few people who had been entrusted with the Torah, because of the Jews' personal and communal infidelity as well as the tumultuous events which recurred throughout their history, could not possibly have protected it from corruption. His extensive recapitulation of that history is designed to corroborate this thesis.

He begins by asserting that only Eleazar, the son of Aaron, had the Torah in his custody; after his death, the custody passed to his son Phinehas⁶⁸ [1:187]. It is highly unlikely that he would have been able to keep the holy text from corruption, in light of the context in which he lived, as described in the books of Joshua and Judges. The children of Israel repeatedly fell into apostasy and idol-worship. Their leaders, moreover, were reprobates. Abimelech, for instance, was depraved (Jg. 9) [1:188]. Jephthah, the son of a prostitute, sacrificed his own daughter (Jg. 11:29ff.) [1:188-189]. Samson was famous for his liaisons with prostitutes (e.g., Jg. 16:1), and yet the Jews ascribe miracles to him [1:189]. After Samuel, priestly rule passed to his wicked sons Joel and Abijah (1 Sam. 8) [1:189]. Saul, whom the Jews consider a prophet (cf. 1 Sam. 10:11-12, 19:24), is depicted as perverted, unjust, and sinful, as indicated throughout the text of 1 Samuel (e.g., 15:10-35). All in all, Ibn Hazm concludes, from the entry into the land until the reign of Saul, Israel apostatized seven times: the first time for eight years; the second, for eighteen years; the third, for twenty years; the fourth, for seven years; the fifth, for three or more years; the sixth, for eighteen years; and the seventh, for forty years [1:189]. How, he asks, could the integrity of

⁶⁸At this point Ibn Hazm notes that one group of Jews maintains that Phinehas (along with Elijah, Melchizedek, and the servant Abraham sent to Paddam-Aram) is still alive [1:187]. Here he is drawing on midrashic sources which characterize these figures as immortal and eschatologically significant. See, for example, Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Batra* 121b and *Genesis Rabbah* 21:5, 25:1 (trans. Neuser 1985, 1:233, 271), which refer to Elijah's immortality; and *Numbers Rabbah* 21:3 (trans. Slotkin 1939, 829), which refers to Phinehas'. (Rabbinic tradition came to identify Elijah with Phinehas because of their common zeal [cf. Num. 25:7ff., 1 Kgs. 18-19]; see *Pirke de R. Eliezer* 47 [trans. Friedlander 1916, 371] and Ginzberg 1909-38, 3:389, 6:138.) Of course, the biblical tale of Elijah's ascent to heaven (2 Kgs. 2:11) on the fiery chariot also implies that he never died. The longer recension 2 Enoch (Slavonic Enoch) mentions the eschatological return of Melchizedek in 71:34: "And afterward, in the last generation, there will be another Melchizedek, the first of 12 priests" (ed. Charlesworth 1983, 1:208). Moreover, Abraham's steward (usually identified as Eliezer of Damascus) never died, according to the first chapter of *Derakh Eretz Zuta*, a post-talmudic tractate. He was, rather, permitted to enter paradise alive as a reward for his faithful service to Abraham (Ginzberg 1909-38, 1:297).

the Torah have been maintained when infidelity was so rife and concentrated in such a small area [1:190]?

And the situation did not improve in the days of the monarchy. David, according to the texts of the Jews (2 Sam. 11ff.) was guilty of public adultery with the mother of Solomon and murdered all the sons of Saul except the cripple (cf. 2 Sam. 21, esp. v. 7).⁶⁶ Despite the biblical injunction that horses not be multiplied (Dt. 17:16), Solomon built an army of twelve thousand cavalymen, plus another forty thousand mounted on mares (cf. 1 Kgs. 4:26)! The transgressions of the monarchy only increased after Solomon's death, when the realm divided into northern and southern kingdoms, each with its own monarchs [1:190].

In the southern kingdom, during the reign of Solomon's son and successor Rehoboam, the Temple was sacked and everything in it—including the Torah, presumably—was taken from it (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:25ff.) [1:191]. Even if the text had somehow been preserved up to that point, it would certainly have been corrupted as a result of the iniquity of the kings who followed. Azariah killed Amos the prophet.⁶⁷ Manasseh, son of Hezekiah, killed Isaiah by sawing him from the head to the anus (or by stoning him). This same Manasseh, according to the Jews, was taken captive by the king of Babylon, who led him to Babylon on a brass bull under which fire burned. But after praying, Manasseh was purportedly taken from the bull and miraculously returned to Jerusalem, where he still persisted in iniquity⁶⁸ [1:192].

According to Ibn Hazm, during the reign of Josiah, when the end of the southern kingdom was imminent, Jeremiah took the tabernacle, ark, and fire⁶⁹ and hid them in an unknown place (cf. 2 Macc. 2:4ff.). In all likelihood, the Torah was among the articles hidden. If this event were not enough to ensure the loss of the authentic text, the actions of later kings certainly were. Ibn Hazm asserts that Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, took the Torah from the hands of the high priest and crossed out

⁶⁶Ibn Hazm curses the Jews "a million times" for attributing such depravity to a prophet of God [1:190]!

⁶⁷According to rabbinic tradition (as described in chap. 97 of *Shulhelet ha-Kabbalah* [The Chain of Tradition], written by Gedaliah ben Joseph ibn Yahya [d. 1578]), it was Azariah (or Uziah), as he was also called; cf. 2 Kgs. 15:1, 13, 30) who killed Amos by striking him on the forehead with a red-hot iron [Ginzberg 1909-38, 4:262, 6:357].

⁶⁸These tales concerning Manasseh are not biblical but are based (sometimes loosely) on rabbinic texts, specifically Babylonian Talmud, *Yerushot* 49b, *Seder Olam Rabbah* 24; Jerusalem Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 10:2, 28c; cf. Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 102b, 103b (cf. Ginzberg 1909-38, 4:278-281, 6:372-376.)

⁶⁹It was important to preserve the fire of the altar since it purportedly had descended from heaven (cf. Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma* 21b).

all occurrences of the name of God in it. Then his successor Eliakim is said to have burned the Torah, leaving no trace of it.⁷⁰ Even though the Torah, from the very beginning of Judah until its end, was supposedly safeguarded in the Temple by the Aaronid chief priest,⁷¹ its preservation was undermined by the iniquities of such kings⁷² [1:193].

The kings of the northern kingdom were not any better. In fact, while in the history of the southern kingdom five faithful kings did arise (viz., Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joram, Hezekiah, and Josiah), not a single righteous ruler appeared in the north in 271 years of monarchy. The northern kings engaged in idolatry, terrorized the prophets, and forbade their subjects to go to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices. To be sure, in the north Elijah was able to kill the prophets of Baal, but he was persecuted by Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab (1 Kgs. 18-19) and was forced to flee, never to be seen again. After recounting the deeds of the kings of Israel from Jeroboam to Hoshea, Ibn Hazm recalls the Assyrian conquest and deportation, and the subsequent genesis of the Samaritan people, who provide yet another chapter in the story of the Torah's corruption. These Samaritans, Ibn Hazm, notes, rejected the Torah of the Jews in favor of their own. They accepted no prophet after Moses and rejected the Temple, making Nablus their holy city. Their Torah is even less reliable than that of the Jews since it was not formed on the authority of any prophet but rather was forged by their leaders [1:193-195].

⁷⁰Again Ibn Hazm's statement is based on an extrapolation of rabbinic materials, in which Eliakim (whose name was later changed by Pharao Neco to Jehoiakim; cf. 2 Kgs. 23:34; 2 Chron. 36:4) is depicted as the epitome of evil and rebellion against God. In the Babylonian Talmud (*Mo'ed Katan* 26a), for example, he is said to have cut all references to God out of the Book of Lamentations and then to have thrown them into the fire. Apparently, in the source used by Ibn Hazm, part of Eliakim's villainy is ascribed to his younger brother and predecessor Jehoahaz (2 Kgs. 23:31ff.).

⁷¹It was from this book kept by the priests that the king was to transcribe a copy in his own hand for his edification in the law (cf. Dt. 17:18-19). According to Ibn Hazm, the chief priest was each day to write an excerpt for the king to study [1:198] (cf. *Sifre to Deuteronomy* 160 [trans. Neusner 1987, 2:30], where the Levitical priests are described as *correcting* the copy of the text used by the king, to ensure its accuracy). Such stipulations were observed, Ibn Hazm asserts, only by the four or five righteous kings in Judah's history; all others ignored them. Moreover, the Aaronid priest was to read the Torah to the Israelites who were to assemble in Jerusalem three times each year (cf. Dt. 16:16). This also failed to occur because after Solomon's reign the northern tribes did not worship in Jerusalem, and even the people of Judah and Benjamin did not assemble there except during the reigns of the aforementioned righteous kings [1:199].

⁷²Besides, Ibn Hazm argues, the Aaronid priests themselves, to whom the Torah was entrusted, fell prey to unbelief, godlessness, and idol-worship. (The two sons of Eli [1 Sam. 2:12ff.] serve as support for this claim.) This lack of trustworthiness among the priests lends even greater weight to the argument for the Torah's alteration and corruption [1:199].

In short, throughout the monarchical period, whether in the north or the south, infidelity prevailed. "What books or what religion," Ibn Hazm asks, "could be properly preserved in such conditions?" [1:196].

Moreover, the events of the exilic and post-exilic periods decreased even further the possibility of the Torah's accurate transmission. Consider, for example, that when Nebuchadnezzar invaded Jerusalem, he destroyed the Temple so that nothing was left in it, including, presumably, the Torah [1:196]. Only after an extended period (forty years, in Ibn Hazm's reckoning) following the return from seventy years of exile was the Torah reconstituted by Ezra (cf. 2 Esdras 14:37-46), who dictated it from memory, inventing it with his fellows and creatively filling in the many gaps. This occurred at a time of great tumult, when the Jews had no prophets among them, no central sanctuary, and no ark. They argued whether the holy fire from the altar of the first Temple was still present among them (cf. 2 Macc. 1:19-23). During this time the Torah was subject to further corruption, continuing to circulate from hand to hand until Antiochus defiled the Temple (ca. 167 B.C.E.; cf. 1 Macc. 1:41-57) [1:197].

By the time the Hasmonaeans came to power, the Torah was scattered. Without the guidance of authentic scripture, the Jews fell victim to religious innovation. The learned men of the time created new prayers, which were meant to take the place of the Temple sacrifices, thus making a "new religion" for the Jews, a religion different from that given to them by Moses. Synagogues were built, and Sabbath assemblies instituted. This multiplicity of houses of worship stood in direct contradiction to the earlier practice of centralized worship at the Temple in Jerusalem (or at the tent of meeting before the Temple was built); furthermore, no Saturday assemblies had been held during Israel's period of self-rule, as the new, contrived practice required [1:197-198].⁷⁶ Then the translation of the Seventy caused even greater variation in the text in that it differs from that which Ezra wrote.⁷⁷ [1:198] All of this leads Ibn Hazm to conclude:

⁷⁶It is significant that Ibn Hazm characterizes Jewish practices as novel creations, since the term for heresy in Islam, *bida*, literally means "innovation." Though he does not explicitly use this term here, he is certainly describing its connotations.

⁷⁷Ibn Hazm notes specifically that the LXX differs from the Hebrew text with regard to the lifespans of the patriarchs between Adam and Noah, yielding a difference of more than a thousand years in the chronologies of the Christians and the Jews. See also Chapter IV.C.2.

These are all clear proofs that it (the Torah) is corrupted, altered, and fabricated. And if it is thus, it is not at all possible in any reasonable way to take this fabricated and invented account as a witness in establishing the soundness of law or in reporting a miracle or in authenticating prophecy. This is a matter about which there is no doubt.⁷⁸ [1:202]

C. Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that Ibn Hazm attacks the Torah and other sacred texts of the Jews on a number of levels. Some of his criticisms have a distinctively moral tone, focusing on what he considers to be the inappropriate things that these texts say about God or the prophets (§§1, 2, 8, 9). Others focus on the factual errors or lack of consistency supposedly found in them (§§3, 4, 5, 6, 7). At a more fundamental level, however, Ibn Hazm attributes the distortion of the Jewish scriptures to the process by which they were passed down through the generations (§10).⁷⁹ In any case, the thrust of his presentation is clear: the holy books on which the Jews base their religion are rife with error and thus untrustworthy.

⁷⁸Ibn Hazm draws this conclusion after a detailed examination of Dt. 32:1-43, a pericope "without equal in the text of their Torah" [1:201]. He cites the passage *in extenso* (his version differing at points from the MT, LXX, and Vulgate, as noted below in the Excursus following Chapter VII) and then offers a critique to show how even this most hallowed of Jewish texts has obviously undergone corruption [1:200-202]. For example, this chapter clearly teaches divine filiation, claiming that God begot the children of Israel, making them his sons and daughters (vv. 6, 19); as if this error were not bad enough in itself, it served to pave the way for the Christians' claim that God begot a son [1:201]. The chapter also applies inappropriate imagery to God, depicting him as carrying his people upon his wings (v. 11). Furthermore, it proffers factual lies -- for example, in stating that God divided the nations, fixing their number according to that of the sons of Israel (v. 8). How can this be so when the number of nations continually varies, being fixed at no particular number, let alone twelve [1:202]?

⁷⁹As we have noted, Ibn Hazm blames Ezra for the textual distortion of the Torah, charging that his restoration of the text after the Exile was flawed. We have seen that others (e.g., Ibn Qutayba [see Chapter II.C.8], al-Tabari [see Chapter II.D.1], and al-Maqdisi [see Chapter II.D.4]) also describe Ezra as reconstituting the Torah but, unlike Ibn Hazm, they affirm the authenticity of his reconstitution.

CHAPTER IV

Ibn Hazm's Critique of the Gospels and Other Christian Texts

In the previous chapter, we examined Ibn Hazm's critique of Jewish sacred texts. We shall now turn to his critique of sacred writings deemed authoritative by Christians. After noting (A) how this latter evaluation is linked with the former, we shall consider (B) the structure and (C) the substance of his arguments against the *Injil* (Gospel) and other Christian writings.

In examining the substance of these arguments, texts, we shall use thematic categories based on his textual criticisms, which include: (1) faulty transmission, (2) discrepancies with the Jewish scriptures, (3) blasphemies against God (by virtue of teaching divine filiation, compromising the divine attributes, and propounding polytheism and *shirk*), (4) blasphemy against Christ as a prophet (by virtue of depicting him as a liar, as one subject to Satan's power, and as a counterfeit miracle-worker), (5) contradictions between the gospels, (6) contradictions within the gospels, and (7) absurdities and falsehoods. Furthermore, Ibn Hazm points to another indication of the distortion of the Christian sacred texts: (8) the fact that certain passages which escaped corruption contradict Christian claims and reveal the doctrine of the pristine Gospel, before the process of *tahrif* began.

A. The Critique of the Gospel as an Extension of the Critique of the Torah

For Ibn Hazm to make his critique of the Jewish scriptures complete, he must demonstrate the corruption of the Gospel. Even if the Torah originally given to Moses was lost by the Jews, one could argue that it was restored to its pristine integrity by Jesus (who is recognized as a true prophet by Islam) and given accurate expression in his Gospel. Thus Ibn Hazm takes upon himself the task of showing that the Christian revelation underwent even worse alteration than the Mosaic [1:210].

Ibn Hazm admits that Jesus indeed had the Torah and Gospel as revealed by God; the Qur'an, after all, says as much: "And God will teach him [Jesus] the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel" (3:48). But what Christians today possess in their holy texts does not accurately reflect that revelation. According to Ibn Hazm, Christian scriptural revelation derives from five individuals (Matthew, Peter, John, James, and Judas) and was passed down through three others (Luke, Mark, and Paul), all of whom were mendacious and untrustworthy. These last three did nothing more than spread the precepts of Judaism while secretly inviting their followers to faith in the Trinity. Thus, after Christ's ascension, both the Torah and the Gospel disappeared completely [1:210].¹

People of the Book, therefore, should not be misled by various statements in the Qur'an appearing to validate their holy books. Ibn Hazm adduces a number of these and explains how they are properly to be understood. With regard to 5:71 ("O People of the Book! Ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord"), he notes that Jews and Christians cannot observe the Law and Gospel because they no longer possess these texts. Thus this verse does not legitimate their claims; rather, it requires the People of the Book to embrace Islam, since they cannot know the true content of the revelations to Moses and Jesus except through that of Muhammad, through whom God "corrected" the accumulated corruption of the previous prophetic

¹In addition to the Torah and the Gospel, attributed to Moses and Jesus, respectively, the scriptural heritage of the Jews and Christians, according to Islamic tradition, also includes the Psalms, attributed to David, as well as other "pages" given to Abraham and Moses and an uncertain number of books given to other prophets (cf. 1:211-212). Even though he notes this more nuanced description of the revelations given to the People of the Book, Ibn Hazm usually uses the simplified rubric of "Torah and Gospel" to refer to the totality of the Jewish and Christian revelations.

messages. Qur'an 5:69 ("If only they had stood fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that was sent to them by their Lord, they would have enjoyed happiness from every side") and 4:47 ("O ye People of the Book! Believe in what we have [now] revealed, confirming what was [already] with you") should be interpreted along the same lines. Likewise, when the Qur'an appeals to the Torah ("Bring ye the Law and study it" [3:93; cf. 5:47]² or the *Injil* ("Let the People of the Gospel judge by what God has revealed therein" [5:50, cf. 5:49]), it is referring to the original version of each, not to the distorted versions now in the hands of Jews and Christians. Nevertheless, as a clear indication of their once-pure state, even the present, distorted texts contain passages attesting to the coming of the prophet Muhammad, passages which, by God's design, managed to escape the corrupting hand of Jewish and Christian deceivers [1:211-215].

Thus, it is doubly important to prove the corruption of the *Injil*: first, to demonstrate that the Christians can no longer lay claim to God's revelation through Jesus; and second, to disabuse the People of the Book of any false hope that the true substance of the Torah, though known by Jesus, has managed to survive in the Christian scriptures.

B. Structure of the Presentation

Like his critique of the Torah and other Jewish texts, Ibn Hazm's argument against the authenticity of the Christian scriptures manifests a readily discernible structure, which can be outlined as follows:

I. Introduction [2:4]

- A. Description of formal characteristics of the New Testament books he intends to examine
- B. Description of extra-biblical Christian texts he intends to examine

II. Impossibility of the accurate transmission of the New Testament [2:4-5]

²According to Ibn Hazm, Muhammad exhorted his listeners to "bring the Law (*Taurat*) and study it" only because the Jews were lying to them about what was said in it. Muhammad wanted to prove their lie on the basis of their own book. "How many times the same thing has happened to us!" Ibn Hazm writes. "When they escape safe and sound from debate, it is through lies!" [1:213].

³In this chapter, I use the designations "New Testament" and "Old Testament" in analyzing the content of the *Treatise*. These terms, however, are foreign to the text itself, in which Ibn Hazm refers to the scriptures of the Jews and Christians as the Torah and Gospel, or simply as "their books."

III. Plan of critique [2:6]

- A. That the New Testament revelation was not accurately transmitted
- B. That the Christian Old Testament differs from the Bible of the Jews
- C. That the New Testament is full of impieties, contradictions, and lies

IV. That the Christian Old Testament differs from the Torah of the Jews [2:6-10]

V. Examination of the gospel of Matthew [2:11-54]. Ibn Hazm clearly sees Matthew as the "primary" gospel, the one from which the three others derive. It is the structure of this gospel which largely determines the structure of this part of the *Treatise*. Proceeding through the text of Matthew chapter by chapter (the biblical text he uses is divided into chapters, though they differ, sometimes significantly, from the modern division), he considers one controversial passage after another, augmenting his critique by adducing parallel passages from the other gospels. He then turns to the other gospels to pick out other critical passages not found in Matthew:

VI. Examination of the gospel of Mark [2:54-56]

VII. Examination of the gospel of Luke [2:56-61]

VIII. Examination of the gospel of John [2:61-68]. Ibn Hazm devotes considerable attention to this gospel because its "high" christology and mystical overtones provide much material for him to challenge.

IX. Examination of other New Testament texts [2:69-71]

- A. 1 John
- B. Revelation
- C. 2 Peter
- D. Galatians
- E. Philemon
- F. Romans
- G. 1 Corinthians

X. Examination of post-biblical developments in Christianity [2:72-74]

- A. Popular Christian tales
- B. Christian practices and doctrines
 - 1. Miracles
 - 2. Asceticism

XI. Conclusion [2:74-75]

Let us now examine in detail the content of Ibn Hazm's argument.

C. Corruption of the *Injil* and Other Sacred Texts of the Christians

According to Ibn Hazm, his charge that the Christian scriptures present a fallacious message should not be surprising in the least. After all, unlike the Jews, who maintain that their sacred book comes directly from a prophet (viz., Moses), Christians cannot even advance such a claim. All Christians, of whatever sect, admit that their gospels were not revealed by God to Christ but were composed by four different men at different times. If a prophetic text could be corrupted to include falsehood, how much more a text which did not even have a prophetic origin [2:2]!

Before focusing on specific flaws of the gospels, Ibn Hazm describes the origin and length of each as follows:⁴ The first to be composed was that of Matthew, which was written in Hebrew nine years after Christ's ascension and consists of some twenty-eight pages in letters of regular width. The second was that of Mark, a disciple of Simon Peter. It was written in Greek in the city of Antioch some twenty-two years after the ascension. It was Simon himself who composed the text, but he later removed his name from it and attributed it to his disciple Mark. It consists of twenty-four pages of medium-width letters. Luke, the third gospel, was also written in Greek by a disciple of Simon Peter, but in the city of Acaya. It is approximately the same length as Matthew. Finally, the latest of the gospels, that of John, was written some sixty years after the ascension. It was written in Athens in Greek that covered some twenty-four folios. It was the author of this Gospel, Ibn Hazm says, who translated Matthew's Hebrew into Greek [2:2-3]. It was from Matthew's gospel that all the others were derived [2:4].

Likewise, he gives a cursory description of other New Testament texts. Acts, we are told, consists of some fifty pages of compressed letters. Revelation is described as a work full of fables, supposedly related to the author in visions while he was asleep. Each of the "canonical" (*qāmūniya*) epistles, "full of nonsense and foolishness," is said

⁴The source of this information is unknown. It is very unlikely that Ibn Hazm had access to the Greek manuscripts described here. Perhaps the biblical text he used included such data in introductory material, or he had access to other Christian works written in Arabic, presumably for use by the Mozarabs.

to be one or two pages in length, while the epistles of Paul cover some forty pages [2:3].

Moreover, Christians adhere to writing by their bishops (*asāqifatuḥum*) and patriarchs (*baṭāraquḥum*), including the decrees of the Six Great Councils and other lesser councils, as well as laws imposed on Christians by various rulers in various countries, e.g., King Rodrigo's legislation for Christians in Spain. According to Ibn Ḥazm, Christians also count various accounts (*akḥbār*) of their martyrs among their sacred texts [2:3].⁵

Ibn Ḥazm notes that all Christians, both Eastern and Western, regardless of their sect, accept the same redaction (*nuskha*) of the New Testament [2:4].

On the basis of these observations, Ibn Ḥazm now turns to his specific arguments against the validity of the Christian scriptures.

1. Impossibility of Accurate Transmission

Preservation of authentic doctrine was an even greater impossibility for Christians than it was for Jews. After all, the Jews had a long-standing kingdom, a large population, and numerous prophets. The Christians can make no such claims. No more than one hundred twenty men believed in Christ during his lifetime (cf. Acts 1:15), along with a small group of women who supported him from their own means. And these few followers lived in constant fear, operating in secrecy. They were all captured and put to death by various means: James and Stephen by stoning; Peter, Andrew, Simon brother of Joseph, Philip, and Paul by crucifixion; James son of Zebedee, Thomas, Bartholomew, Judas brother of Joseph, and Matthew by decapitation; and John son of Zebedee by poison.⁶ Thus, for three hundred years after Christ's ascension, Christianity had only an underground existence [2:4].

During these centuries of persecution and instability, the authentic Gospel as proclaimed by Jesus disappeared. Christianity became public only with Constantine, who became a Christian, Ibn Ḥazm tells us, because his mother, the daughter of a Christian, had raised him secretly as one. He declared his Christianity openly only

⁵Most likely, he is referring here to one or several of the works of Eulogius (*Liber apologeticus martyrum*, *Memoriale sanctorum*, *Documentum martyrale*) or of Paulus Alvarus (*Indiculus luminosus*, *Vita Eulogii*), which depict the martyrdom of Christians in mid-ninth-century Córdoba.

⁶The source of this information was probably a Christian martyrology circulating in Mozarabic circles. Such martyrological accounts certainly existed in Spain. As we have remarked, Ibn Ḥazm himself mentions them [2:3; see note 5, above].

after many years, and even then he and his son and successor were Arians, not orthodox in doctrine [2:5].

All these facts made it impossible for Christianity to safeguard authentic tradition. Doctrines held in secret and under constant fear became subject to a multitude of alterations, and the faithful were unable to defend true doctrine against such inevitable corruption. Even after Christianity became a public religion, many false teachings (e.g., those of Manicheanism) flourished within it [2:5].

Besides, Christians cannot prove that any of the persons who gave rise to their religion (e.g., Peter, John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or Paul) worked authentic miracles. All Christian accounts of such miracles are apocryphal, much like the accounts of the wonders attributed by the Jews to their rabbis, by the Manicheans to Mani, by the Shi'ites to their imams, and by Muslims to certain "saints" (*ṣāliḥīn*). All of these are lies and inventions which cannot be substantiated by authentic tradition [2:5-6].

2. Discrepancies with the Jewish Scriptures

Christians claim that they accept the truth of the Jewish scriptures, taking select passages from them and interpreting them allegorically in an attempt to prove the tenets of their faith. In so doing, they maintain that their Torah and Prophets are identical to those of the Jews. This, however, is not the case.

The Christians use the Septuagint (LXX), not the Torah of Ezra used by the Jews (even though the Jews, as mentioned earlier, also accept the validity of the LXX). As an example of how this version of the Old Testament and the Hebrew Bible differ, Ibn Ḥazm points to nineteen passages in Gen. 5 and 11 in which the two disagree regarding the lengths of various time-spans. For example, the Torah of the Jews says "when Adam was 130 years old" (Gen. 5:3); the LXX, on the other hand, "when Adam was 230 years old." The Torah says that Eber was born to Shelah when the latter was 30 (Gen. 11:14-15); the LXX, when he was 130. The Jewish text maintains that Arpachshad had lived 35 years when Shelah was born to him and that Arpachshad lived a total of 435 years.⁷ The Old Testament of the Christians, on the other hand, says that when Arpachshad had lived 135 years, Kenan was born to him; that Arpachshad lived a total of 465 years; and that when Kenan was 130, Shelah was born to him. Thus, in this passage, the two versions differ not only vis-à-vis Arpachshad's lifespan and when his son was born; the LXX actually adds another person to the story (viz., Kenan) between

⁷The MT (Gen. 11:12) says Arpachshad lived a total of 438, not 435, years.

Arpachshad and Shelah. All these differences cause a discrepancy of 1350 years between the chronologies of the two versions. Obviously, Ibn Hazm concludes, such a discrepancy cannot be from God or from a prophet—or even from a well-informed man; it is the result of faulty textual transmission [2:7-9].

In light of these inconsistencies, Christians are obliged to accept one of the following five consequences:

(1) The Torah and other books of the Jews are authentic. Indeed Christians maintain this, but in so doing they admit that they themselves and their ancestors are liars in that their text contradicts that of the Jews, as we have seen.

(2) Moses and his doctrine are to be rejected. Christians will not agree to this.

(3) Reject the Judaic tradition of the Torah and other books but accept those passages which testify to the Messiah. Christians cannot do this because it would be inconsistent to reject a tradition and then to argue on the basis of certain texts from that tradition.

(4) Accept only the LXX. Christians cannot maintain such a position. Were the Seventy who translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek truthful or mendacious? If the former, how could Christians reject the Hebrew version on which they based their translation? If the latter, then why should the LXX, as a work produced by liars, be accepted? If the LXX is true, then two Torahs, that of Ezra and the LXX, must exist. But the two texts contradict each other; it is therefore illogical to hold that both are true.

(5) Reject both the Hebrew Bible and the LXX as fallacious and corrupt. This is the stance defended by Ibn Hazm. He asserts that he could bring against the LXX the very same charges he already has brought against the biblical texts of the Jews—not to mention the issue of the discrepancies between the two [2:9-10].

In any case, even if the LXX and Hebrew Bible agreed, one could not accept certain data of the New Testament that are inconsistent with those of the Old. For example, the genealogy of Matthew 1:1-17 is not consistent with genealogical data given in the Torah and in the books of Kings and Chronicles. To cite but one example: Mt. 1:9 states that Jotham was the son of Uzziah, while 1 Chron. 3:11-12 states the Jotham was the son of Azariah, son of Amasiah, son of Joash, son of Uzziah; thus three names are missing from the Matthean account of Jesus' lineage! Either Matthew or the books of the Jews are fallacious; both cannot be true [2:11].

Furthermore, Ibn Hazm argues, if Christians really accept the validity of the Jewish scriptures, why do they condone practices and regulations which directly oppose what these scriptures require? For instance, according to the New Testament, Jesus articulated a new law of divorce (Mt. 5:31-32) and nullified the *lex talionis* (Mt. 5:38), in both cases contradicting what had been given by Moses. Likewise, Paul prohibited circumcision (Acts 21:21) and Peter permitted the eating of unclean food (Acts 10) although both measures were diametrically opposed to the laws of the Torah. Nor do Christians observe the Sabbaths and festivals designated by the Jewish scriptures, even though Christ and his disciples did so until they died.⁸ In all these things, therefore, Christians stand in rebellion against God. They cannot even appeal to the idea of abrogation, since, according to them, Christ denied the possibility of it (cf. Mt. 5:17-19). It is hard to believe, Ibn Hazm writes, that any group could espouse such conduct as the Christians do; indeed he would not have believed it if he had not witnessed it with his own eyes [2:21-22].

Besides, if the Torah of the Jews is considered to be true, then Christians must hold that Christ himself and several of his apostles are accused in that they suffered crucifixion (cf. Dt. 21:23) [2:23].

Such arguments lead Ibn Hazm to observe how different the false religions of Judaism and Christianity are from the "great gift" of God, the religion of Islam, which can claim an unadulterated, authentic tradition going back to the Messenger of God himself, a religion "infallible and true, exempt from every lie and all error, to whose truth even natural reason testifies!" [2:10].

3. Blasphemy against God

The New Testament of the Christians can also be rejected as fallacious on the grounds that it blasphemes God in a number of ways.

a. Divine Filiation

It propounds, for instance, the erroneous doctrine of divine filiation, i.e., that God engendered a son. Ibn Hazm finds fault with the

⁸Apparently, Ibn Hazm argues, Jesus expected his followers to keep the Sabbath to the end of time. In his foretelling of the eschatological tribulation, Christ tells his disciples to pray that they will not have to flee on the Sabbath (Mt. 24:20), i.e., that they may avoid profaning the Sabbath. Obviously he expected the Sabbath to be observed by his followers until the last day! [2:46]. He notes elsewhere that, according to the gospels, Mary and the other women who went to the tomb after the crucifixion delayed their trip until the Sabbath had passed, in strict observance of the Sabbath law [2:54].

New Testament for calling Christ the Son of God. He reaffirms the Islamic belief that God is far above having a son, whether Christ or anyone else. He is, rather, the God of Christ and of everyone besides Christ! The nonsense of this Christian teaching is compounded by the use of the title "Son of Man" in tandem with the title "Son of God." If Christ is God, as the Christians say, how can he be the Son of Man as well? How could a man engender God [2:24]?

Having rejected the possibility of divine filiation, however, Ibn Hazm feels compelled to safeguard the Qur'anic teaching that Christ was conceived by God's spirit, completely without the agency of a human father (Sura 19:17-32). If, on the one hand, the New Testament errs by implying that Christ is God's son, it also errs by implying that he is the son of a human father, contradicting both Christian and Islamic doctrine. The genealogy of Mt. 1, though supposedly tracing the lineage of Christ, in reality traces the lineage of Joseph. All the generations listed lead through Joseph to Jesus. Why is this done? Jesus was not the son of Joseph, and by thus tracing the genealogy, Matthew actually gives support to the Jews who allege that he was. Similarly, the New Testament elsewhere calls Jesus the "carpenter's son" (Mt. 13:55); it states that "his father [Joseph] and mother [Mary] marveled" (Lk. 2:33) and that Mary said, "Your father [Joseph] and I..." (Lk. 2:48). Those texts in which Jesus is depicted as descended from David (e.g., Mt. 9:27, 15:22) lend even greater support to the argument for Joseph's paternity (since he was a descendant of David) despite the fact that Jesus specifically denied his Davidic ancestry (cf. Mt. 22:42-45, Mk. 12:35-37, Lk. 20:41-44). Ibn Hazm is appalled at such texts, seeing them as falsely denying Jesus' conception through divine agency. He rejects the Christian explanation that, in referring to Joseph in such a way, the New Testament means only that he was the husband of Jesus' mother and therefore merely Jesus' stepfather. In any case, all of this talk is ridiculous if one holds, as do the Christians, that Jesus is God. How could God have a mother or stepfather—or even brothers and sisters, as other New Testament texts state [2:34-35, 57-59]?" In attributing such things to God, the New Testament blasphemes in an egregious way.

¹⁰The fact that the New Testament states that Christ had four male siblings (Simon, Judas, James, and John), in addition to several female ones, is the "shame of the centuries." It gives "evil tongues" the opportunity to say that Mary (who apparently was the mother of these siblings since no other wife of Joseph is mentioned) conceived Jesus by another marriage or by fornication. Such material in the New Testament indicates, according to Ibn Hazm, that the gospels were forged by the Jews to corrupt and destroy Christian doctrine [2:59; cf. 2:35].

The New Testament extends the error of filiation even further, attributing it not only to Jesus but to other human beings as well. John's gospel, for instance, asserts that those who believe in Jesus' name were born not of human will but of God (Jn. 1:12-13). Has God engendered all these people [2:63]? Elsewhere in the same gospel Jesus, in responding to the accusation that he was blaspheming by calling himself the son of God, cites the Psalms to the effect that all human beings are gods (Jn. 10:33-38; cf. Ps. 82:6) [2:67]. If the Christians dare to respond that here such statements are metaphorical, then why do they take similar statements about Christ literally? Perhaps statements concerning Christ's divine sonship should also be taken metaphorically [2:63]. The New Testament thus seems to indicate that Christ, by virtue of his supposed filiation, has no more claim to an exalted status than anyone else. After all, he refers to God as "our Father" (Mt. 6:9), implying that God is Father not only to him but to all human beings. In speaking to the people he says, "Your Father already knows you need all this" (cf. Mt. 6:32) and "I go to my Father and your Father" (Jn. 20:17). Thus Christ, having God as his Father, can claim nothing more than all others [2:24]. The same is implied in those passages in the gospel of John in which the disciples are told that they are no longer servants but brothers of Christ (Jn. 15:15). If Christ is God, then they are brothers to the Creator and, like Christ, proceed from him (cf. Jn. 16:28). These passages not only blaspheme God; they also compromise Christ's uniqueness [2:68]. The same denial of Christ's special status is implicit in the gospel of Luke, in which it is stated that, in addition to Jesus (4:1), John the Baptist (1:15) and Elizabeth (1:41) were full of the Holy Spirit. If they all had the same Holy Spirit, how can Jesus be considered more excellent than they [2:18]? Likewise, John's first epistle states that "we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him" (1 Jn. 3:2). What could be more impious than this, Ibn Hazm asks: claiming not only to be God's children but also to be capable of attaining similarity to him [2:69]?

The absurdity of the doctrine of filiation is highlighted in the New Testament episode in which John encounters Jesus at the Jordan River, calling him the "Lamb of God" and then testifying that he is the Son of God (Jn. 1:29,34). How can a lamb be the son of God? It is, rather, the offspring of male and female sheep, something owned by a person who fattens it and then sacrifices or eats it [2:64]. Again the false teaching of divine filiation leads to blasphemy.

If, for the sake of argument, one accepts the Christian notion of Christ's divinity, one readily discerns a number of other ways in which the New Testament blasphemes God. For example, it describes the

conferral of power on individuals who were certainly not deserving of it. If Christ was God, how could he enable all twelve apostles to cast out spirits (Mt. 10:1-6)? Was Judas, who was later unfaithful and was known to be a thief (Jn. 12:6), not among those who received this power? Either Christ knew of Judas' malice and still empowered him (which would be improper for any honest man to do, let alone God!) or he did not know of Judas' perversity (which would be unthinkable if he was God who created Judas!) [2:26-27]. Similarly, Ibn Hazm asks, how could Christ, as God, give to Peter the keys of the kingdom, which empowered him to "bind" and "loose" (i.e., to permit and prohibit; cf. Mt. 16:19)? In the first place, how could this power, which is a purely divine prerogative, be given to any human being? Secondly, shortly after reporting the conferral of the keys, the New Testament describes Christ as sharply rebuking Peter (ordering him to "get behind me") for failing to recognize the things that please God (Mt. 19:23). How could God engage in such inconsistency? If Christ's rebuke is true, Peter was the sort of person who did not deserve even the keys of a latrine or dunghill, let alone those of the kingdom of God [2:36-37]! Why would the keys be given to such an incredulous and unfaithful individual who, in contradicting Christ, contradicted his Lord, or at least a prophet [2:49]? Moreover, Christ extended this power of the keys to all the apostles (Mt. 18:18), even though a thief and betrayer was among them! Even if one argues that Jesus later withdrew the power from Judas, it must be admitted that the sublime dignity of the gift was significantly compromised by its being bestowed on him in the first place and then by its being summarily revoked, as if it were a trifling thing. Indeed, Ibn Hazm remarks, it would not be surprising "if the mountains and the entire earth were annihilated and the high heavens collapsed and as many as have living souls were struck down by lightning" upon hearing such a thing [2:37]!

Ibn Hazm finds yet another objectionable detail in the account of the conferral of the keys. Perhaps Christ meant that Peter and the other disciples had this power only inasmuch as they received divine inspiration to exercise it. But how can this be when the New Testament elsewhere (Lk. 16:16) maintains that prophecy (which Ibn Hazm equates with divine inspiration) ceased with John the Baptist? On the other hand, if this power was to be exercised without divine inspiration, God would relinquish his power to permit and prohibit, submitting to the merely human decisions of the apostles! This would, in effect, make human beings judges over God [2:38]!

b. Compromising Divine Attributes

Furthermore, the New Testament compromises the transcendence of God. In it Jesus clearly describes himself as eating and drinking (cf. Mt. 11:18). If he were God, this would mean that God eats and drinks! This is inconsistent with God's total otherness. And the Christians cannot say in response that only his humanity ate while his divinity did not; even they admit that Christ's humanity and divinity were always united. It therefore cannot be said that only "half" of Christ ate and drank [2:32].

The New Testament also compromises divine omniscience in that it attributes factually incorrect statements to Christ. For example, in Matthew's gospel Christ is depicted as describing the mustard tree as supporting a number of birds and their nests (Mt. 13:31-32). This is absurd, Ibn Hazm argues; the mustard plant could not support upon itself a single bird. No prophet would say such a thing, let alone God [2:34]!

The New Testament denies divine omnipotence and majesty. The gospel of Matthew, for instance, maintains that Christ could not perform many miracles in his home country (13:58). If Christ were God, how could this be so? Lack of power to perform miracles is not a proper attribute of God; after all, the Qur'an clearly states that miracles come from God (6:109) [2:35-36]. Ibn Hazm also points to the passages in which Jesus is depicted as praying in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Mt. 26:39ff., Mk. 14:35ff., Lk. 22:41ff.) and crying out in agony on the cross ("My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" cf. Mt. 27:46, Mk. 15:34). Are such scenes appropriate to God? Must God be consoled by angels? Must he ask to be delivered from death? Would he sweat in anguish over his impending death? Can he, as God, be abandoned by God? All of this is nonsense. Even if the Christians respond that it was only the human Jesus who did these things, Ibn Hazm points out that all Christians ("both you and the Jacobites") admit the inseparable unity of divinity and humanity in Christ. It is therefore wrong for Christians to attribute to Christ's supposed divinity that which they do; their statements would be acceptable only if they claimed that "half of Christ said such a thing" [2:61]! Moreover, the New Testament impugns God's majesty by implying that there is something greater than it. Phil. 2:6-7 states that even though Christ was in the form of God, he took the form of a servant. Why would he do such a thing? Was there some higher grade that Christ sought to attain, thus motivating him to relinquish his equality with God? Indeed, the New Testament seems to say this when it states that Christ was able to glorify his Father (cf. Jn. 17:1, 4) [2:71; cf. v. 68].

The New Testament also contradicts the doctrine of God's limitlessness. In the gospel of John, for instance, Jesus says to his disciples, "I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you (Jn. 14:20)." If God is in Christ's disciples, then God is limited. How else would he be able to reside in limited beings? Created and temporal beings could not contain that which was limitless. And if one objects that this statement in John's gospel means only that God governs the disciples by his providence, then the text says nothing of significance: God, after all, governs *all* things. Besides, if God were in the disciples, just as he was in Christ, how would Christ be superior in any way to them [2:67-68]?

In addition, the New Testament, by ascribing divine sonship to Christ, impugns God's justice. It is claimed, for instance, that "the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son" (Jn. 5:22) and that the Father "has given him [Christ] authority to execute judgment" (Jn. 5:27) [2:64-65]. To imply that God has thus relinquished his role of supreme judge is to blaspheme.

c. Polytheism and *Shirk*

But perhaps the greatest blasphemy of the New Testament is that, in asserting the divine sonship of Christ, it propounds polytheism and *shirk* (ascribing an associate to God). There are numerous examples of this. In stating, for instance, that no one, not even the Son, knows the day and hour of the *eschaton* (cf. Mt. 24:36, Mk. 13:32), the New Testament clearly teaches that Christ is distinct from God. If it is maintained that he is God, then there would obviously be two gods, one of which is subordinate to the other (in that he lacks knowledge that the other has). The same can be said regarding the episode in which the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, ask that her sons be given the privilege of sitting, one at Christ's right hand and one at his left, in his kingdom (Mt. 20:20-23). Christ responds that such a privilege is not his to confer, but the Father's, clearly showing that he and the Father are distinct. If they are both God, then there are two gods, one weak and the other strong [2:43]! All this amounts to nothing less than polytheism and *shirk* [2:48]. Polytheism is also implied in the description of Christ's ascending to the Father (Mk. 16:19). If Christ is God, then God is seated at the right hand of God! There would be two gods and two lords, even though one is obviously less noble than the other [2:56]!

Furthermore, if Christ is God, why does he ask the Father to

forgive his executioners (Lk. 23:34)? Unless Christ is here petitioning himself (an imbecilic idea), then polytheism is implied [2:60].¹⁰

Moreover, the Gospel of John depicts the Son as distinct from God, e.g., in stating that no one has ever seen God and that only the Son, who is in the Father's bosom, has made him known (Jn. 1:18). If Christ is God, how can one say that no one has ever seen God? Obviously people saw Christ. Thus he is distinct from God and, as distinct, made God known. It is therefore erroneous to affirm that Father and Son are one and the same, as Christians do. Likewise, if the Father gave the Son authority to execute judgment, as John claims (Jn. 5:26-27), then Christ is clearly distinct from God. He who receives a gift (namely, Christ) is certainly distinct from the one who gives it (namely, God) [2:65]. Finally, through their use of images in their churches and worship, Christians are guilty of idolatry and, therefore, of polytheism. They claim to condemn such teachings, but their belief that images put them in contact with the personages they depict belies this claim [2:72].

4. Blasphemy against Christ as Prophet

According to Islamic belief, Christ, as a prophet, was not subject to error or moral fault. The New Testament's depiction of him, however, belies this doctrine, according to Ibn Hazm. He accuses Christians of ascribing imperfections to Christ—something completely inconsistent with his prophethood, not to mention his supposed divinity!

a. Christ as Liar

Perhaps most offensive is the New Testament's attribution of lies to Christ. For example, in the episode of Jesus' raising of the ruler's daughter (cf. Mt. 9:18, 23-26 and parallels), Jesus announces to the people assembled at the ruler's house that the girl is not dead (Mt. 9:24)—a statement contrary to fact. (If it were true, then what miracle did Jesus perform in this episode? God forbid that such a lie would be attributed to a prophet (let alone someone the Christians consider to be God)! Besides, Jesus is depicted as contradicting his own words in this regard when he says to the ruler, "Believe and your daughter *will live*" (cf. Lk. 8:50, Mk. 5:36) [2:25].

¹⁰It is interesting to note that Ibn Hazm challenges the Christians on another point based on Lk. 23:34. Was Christ's prayer for his executioners' forgiveness heard? If not, Ibn Hazm notes, then what greater lowliness could be attributed to a God than that his supplication not be heard? But if it was heard, then why have the Christians and their ancestors shown such injustice to the Jews? How can they curse a people whom their own God has forgiven? Can there be a greater error than this? [2:60].

If the New Testament is to be taken as true, then Christ also lied about the time of his return. That is, he is depicted as promising that "you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes" (Mt. 10:23) and that "some standing here ... will not taste death before they see that the kingdom of God has come with power" (Mk. 9:1; cf. Lk. 9:27). These are both blatant lies: the cities of which he spoke have withered away and all those who were in his presence have died, and still Christ has not returned! No prophet (let alone God) could have spoken so mendaciously [2:27].

Also, as noted above, Jesus in several instances was in the presence of people who said that Joseph was his father, and yet he did not correct them. Why did he behave in such a way? Why did he deliberately treat a falsehood as truth [2:36]? No prophet would have behaved in such a depraved way or erred in such a matter of faith!

The New Testament also depicts Jesus as lying when he prophesies his death (cf. Mt. 16:21-22, Mt. 17:21-22; Lk. 8:34). In these passages he claims that he will be killed. And yet all four gospels agree that he was not killed but rather died of natural causes on the cross. Furthermore, all the evangelists describe Jesus as prophesying his resurrection on the third day, and yet all record that he rose on the second night, i.e., after sunset on Saturday, after having died on Friday. Again Jesus is portrayed as promulgating false prophecy. God forbid such a thing [2:39-40]!

Jesus is elsewhere depicted as making false promises regarding the powers that those who believe in him would have. For example, in Matthew it is promised that if the disciples have faith the size of a mustard seed they will be able to move mountains; nothing will be impossible to them (cf. Mt. 17:19, 21:19-22). In John it is promised that those who believe in Jesus will be able to do even greater things than he did (Jn. 14:12). Are these promises true? The disciples, just like Christians to this day, Ibn Hazm notes, were either believing or unbelieving. There is no third possibility. If they were believers, then Christ lied in his promises since none of them was capable of doing what he supposedly said believers could do [2:40].¹¹ Apparently, then, they were unbelievers, in which case it is not appropriate for Christians to give credence to a religion handed down from such an incredulous lot. And since it is obvious that Christ's promises are meant for all believers, not just for the disciples of his time, Ibn Hazm asks

¹¹Ibn Hazm notes that Matthew himself records how the disciples were incapable of curing a possessed boy because of their faithlessness (Mt. 17:14-18).

Christians, "Do you have faith in Christ?" If they respond in the affirmative, he charges that Christ lied since they exhibit none of the promised powers, for which they need to have faith no greater than the size of a mustard seed. And if they respond that their faith is not even as great as a mustard seed, they testify against themselves [2:41]!

In short, either Christ was lying in making these promises to his disciples (and a liar cannot be a prophet, let alone God!), or he was telling the truth and the disciples (whom Christians consider to be superior to the prophets) were impious men, vacillators in the faith. These things alone, Ibn Hazm concludes, suffice to demonstrate the error of Christianity [2:42]. Christ could never have said the things attributed to him in this regard by the gospels; these statements are the fabrications of the evangelists [2:41]. The Gospel is neither from God nor from a prophet; it is a forgery [2:43].

b. Christ as Subject to Satan

In addition to the lies it ascribes to Christ, the New Testament presents an enormity in its episode of the temptation of Christ at the hands of Satan (Lk. 4:1-12). In this pericope we are told that Christ allows himself to be conducted about by Satan (i.e., to a high mountain, to Jerusalem). Either he willingly allowed himself to be led by the devil, submitting to his power, or he was transported against his will. Neither option would be acceptable to a genuine prophet—and certainly not to someone who, according to the Christians' claim, was God! "Never," Ibn Hazm exclaims, "have I seen a greater stupidity than this extravagant delirium!" [2:17].

c. Christ as Counterfeit Miracle-worker

Finally, the New Testament, in its portrayal of Christ's miracles, impugns his status as a prophet. It depicts Christ as performing his miracles in isolation—as, for example, in the aforementioned episode of the raising of the ruler's daughter. There Jesus is described as sending away the crowd that had assembled around the girl and permitting only her parents and three of his disciples to witness the miracle (cf. Mk. 5:40, Lk. 8:51, 54). Afterwards he even tells those few who had witnessed the miracle to keep it a secret (Mk. 5:43, Lk. 8:56). A prophet would never work miracles in such a way. Neither isolation nor secrecy should characterize miracle-working, and yet the gospels in many instances imply that such circumstances were required for Jesus' miracles. For example, the New Testament describes situations in which Jesus could not perform miracles publicly in the presence of the

Jews (Mt. 12:38ff., 16:1ff.). Such accounts, Ibn Hazm concludes, cannot be genuine; they are lying and falsified [2:25-26].

A closer examination of Mt. 12:38ff. ("...An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah....") reveals two enormities. First, in interpreting Christ's statement that no sign would be given to his generation, one must conclude either that Christ never worked any miracles before the people (only various secret deeds in the presence of his disciples) or that he is lying here, having indeed performed public miracles at various times. Either interpretation contradicts Christian teaching. Second, the miracle of Jonah does not accurately reflect Christ's time in the tomb. That is, Jonah was in the whale for three days and three nights; Christ was in the tomb only a little more than one night and one day. In these matters, either Christ lied or the evangelists were mendacious in relating these statements as they did [2:33].

Furthermore, the New Testament presents the same false teaching regarding miracles as the Torah. Recall that Dt. 13:1-3 forbids the following of a prophet who, after performing signs and wonders, instructs the people to go after other gods; and that Ex. 7 maintains that the magicians of Egypt were able to perform the same miracles as Moses. In his critique of the Hebrew Scriptures, Ibn Hazm took strong exception to these texts: how could a false prophet work true miracles? He therefore reacts negatively against such passages as Mt. 24:11 and Mk. 13:22. In the former, it is claimed that "many false prophets will rise up and deceive many"; in the latter, that "false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect." How could this be? How can it be maintained that false prophets are capable of performing such signs and wonders? Truth is thus mixed with error, and the criterion for distinguishing a true prophet from a false one is eliminated. The truth-validating value of the senses is annulled. Because Jews and Christians believe such things, how can they prove that Moses and Christ are not false prophets? Such passages, Ibn Hazm concludes, were obviously forged by someone who denied all prophecy or by a Manichean who denied the prophecy of Christ and Moses. Certainly, neither Moses nor Christ would have said such things. The Islamic position is clear: a prophet would not lie, and someone who was not a prophet (whether a magician or a skilled prestidigitator) could never effect miracles. (Even Antichrist will not be able to do so; his wonders will amount to nothing more than the kind of works that can be done by any clever human being.) [2:47].

5. Contradictions between Gospels

The multiplicity of gospels prompts Ibn Hazm to consider variations in New Testament accounts of the same topic. He is struck, for example, by discrepancies between the genealogies given by Matthew and Luke. Luke traces Joseph's lineage to Nathan, son of David (Lk. 3:33), not to Nathan's brother Solomon, as does Matthew (Mt. 1:6). It necessarily follows that either Matthew's or Luke's account is wrong, or that both are false; and yet Christians consider Luke to be above the prophets! "Thus is the quality of the gospels!" Ibn Hazm writes. "Praise God, O Muslims, for having exempted you from error!" [2:15].¹²

Numerous other discrepancies between the gospels are evident as well. Ibn Hazm points to variations in their accounts of Jesus' calling of his disciples. Matthew and Mark, for example, both say that Peter and Andrew followed Christ after John the Baptist had been incarcerated, when Christ found them tending to their nets (cf. Mk. 1:14-20, Mt. 4:12-22). Luke says that he found them when they had left their nets after having worked through the night, catching nothing (Lk. 5:1-11). John maintains that one day Andrew, after hearing John the Baptist's words regarding Christ, left the Baptist to follow Christ and then afterwards recruited Peter for the same purpose (Jn. 1:35-42), all of this occurring before the Baptist's arrest (Jn. 3:22-24). Thus, the four evangelists' accounts manifest four discrepancies: (1) with regard to the time at which Peter and Andrew began to follow Christ (i.e., before or after John's arrest); (2) with regard to the place where their call occurred; (3) with regard to whether they followed Jesus simultaneously, or one before the other; (4) with regard to what they were doing at the time of their call. Such inconsistencies obviously cannot proceed from a prophet or even an honest person, but only from a lying person unconcerned with factual detail [2:20]. What is more, if it is true that John translated the gospel of Matthew from Hebrew to Greek (which is what Christians hold, according to Ibn Hazm), then how can one explain the discrepancies between his own account and Matthew's?

¹²Ibn Hazm counters arguments Christians have adduced to explain the genealogical discrepancies found between the gospels. Without specifying his source, Ibn Hazm apparently refers to Augustine's argument (in *De consensu evangeliorum*, ii) that one genealogy is based on biological filiation while the other is based on adoption as understood among the Israelites (i.e., that if a man died without sons and his wife married another with whom she had a son, that son was attributed to the dead husband). Ibn Hazm considers this argument preposterous: where does either Matthew or Luke mention such an idea? Besides, if such a distinction underlies the accounts of the two evangelists, then why are their genealogies virtually the same (from Abraham to David), differing only in the lineage from David to Heli? Obviously one of the genealogies is false! [2:15].

Either he knew that Matthew was lying, or he knew that Matthew was telling the truth. If the former, why would he choose to record Matthew's lie? If the latter, why did he record false information in his own gospel [2:21]?

The gospels even disagree regarding the nature of Christ's mission. On the one hand, Matthew and Luke both claim that Jesus came not to bring peace on earth but a sword (cf. Mt. 10:34, Lk. 12:49-53). On the other hand, Luke and John describe a more benevolent purpose: in the former, Jesus states that the Son of Man came not to destroy but to save (Lk. 9:56); and in the latter, he says that he came not to judge but to save (Jn. 12:47). These two sets of texts are clearly contradictory. If Christians attempt to explain away this contradiction by claiming that Jesus intended to save those who believed in him while destroying those who did not, Ibn Hazm argues, one need only point to the way Jesus dealt with the Samaritans who rejected him (Lk. 9:52-56): When the disciples asked him whether they should call fire down from heaven to consume the faithless Samaritans, Jesus turned and rebuked them. Jesus did not make a neat distinction between those who believed in him and those who did not. Thus, the aforementioned discrepancies in the various descriptions of Jesus' mission cannot be so facilely explained away [2:29].

The gospels also depict John the Baptist's mission in contradictory ways. According to John's gospel, John the Baptist is neither the Messiah nor Elijah, and is not even a prophet (Jn. 1:19-21). Yet in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus is depicted as saying that prophecy had its culmination in John the Baptist, who was "more than a prophet" (Mt. 11:7-14).¹³ So, Ibn Hazm notes, the New Testament at some points holds that John the Baptist was a prophet, at other points that he was more than a prophet, and at still other points that he was no prophet at all! There must be a lie somewhere [2:63-64]!

Even the climax of the gospel story, viz., the account of Jesus' last days, differs from evangelist to evangelist. While Matthew portrays Jesus as sending his disciples to get an ass and her colt (Mt. 21:1-7), Mark portrays him as requiring a colt only (Mk. 11:1-7). This is an obvious contradiction. Moreover, Matthew interprets Jesus' entry into Jerusalem as the fulfillment of a specific prophecy ("Behold, your king is coming to you, humble and mounted on an ass" [cf. Zech. 9:9, Is. 52:11]). But how can he justify such an interpretation? Christ was never

¹³Ibn Hazm states that the gospel of Mark makes the same assertions regarding John the Baptist, though the Matthean texts have no parallels in Mark.

king of Jerusalem; to contend that he was is to propagate a lie. Furthermore, was he the only man ever to enter Jerusalem seated upon an ass [2:44]?

The accounts of Christ's foretelling of Peter's denial also vary in significant details. According to Matthew, Luke, and John, Jesus foretells that before the cock crowed, Peter would deny him three times (cf. Mt. 26:34, Lk. 22:34, Jn. 13:38); according to Mark, he foretells that before the cock crowed twice, Peter would deny him three times (Mk. 14:30). The contradiction is obvious. Furthermore, the accounts disagree regarding the persons to whom Peter made his denial, with Mark giving a markedly different version than the other three evangelists (Mt. 26:69-74; Lk. 22:56-60; Jn. 18:17, 25-27; cf. Mk. 14:66-72) [2:48-49].

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all state that Simon of Cyrene was pressed into carrying Jesus' cross to Golgotha (cf. Mt. 27:32, Mk. 15:21, Lk. 23:26); John, on the other hand, depicts Jesus as carrying his own cross (Jn. 19:17) [2:49]. Ibn Hazm notes that when he brought this fact to the attention of one of the Christian sages, the latter argued that since the wood was very large, both Jesus and Simon carried it together. Ibn Hazm rejects this explanation on the grounds that the gospel texts themselves do not support it. At most, he says, one could possibly argue that Jesus and Simon each carried the cross part of the way [2:50].

The version of the New Testament cited by Ibn Hazm enables him to find yet another contradiction between the passion narratives of the various gospels, a contradiction not supported by the *textus receptus*. According to his text, in both Matthew and Mark the two thieves with whom Jesus was crucified taunt him (in the *textus receptus* it is the passers-by who do the taunting [cf. Mt. 27:38, Mk. 15:27]), while in Luke one of the thieves professes faith in Christ (Lk. 23:39-44)! Here again one finds a significant contradiction, one that cannot be explained away by claiming (as apparently some Christians did) that at first one of the thieves taunted him and then later came to believe in him. One or the other of the accounts must be fallacious [2:50].

While Ibn Hazm does not find noteworthy contradictions in the four gospels' descriptions of how Jesus was crucified, taken down from the cross, and buried, he does discern a number of salient discrepancies between their accounts of what happened at the empty tomb. For example, who went to the tomb on Sunday morning, and when precisely did they go? Matthew says that the two Marys went "toward the dawn" (i.e., before sunrise) while Mark says that not only the two Marys and but Salome as well went after the sun had already risen (cf. Mt. 28:1, Mk. 16:1-2). Whom did the women encounter at the tomb, and when was the stone moved from its entrance? Matthew reports that when the women came to the tomb, an earthquake occurred as an angel

descended and rolled back the stone (Mt. 28:2). Mark says that, arriving at the tomb, the women found that the stone had already been moved; and upon entering, they found a young man clothed in a white robe (Mk. 16:4-5). According to Luke, the women found the stone already rolled back and encountered two men in dazzling garments (Lk. 24:2-4). John tells how only Mary Magdalene went to the tomb, found the stone already rolled back, and saw no one else there. Then, after going to get Simon and John (who ran and saw the empty tomb), she returned later and encountered Christ himself (Jn. 20:1-16) [2:51-53].

The gospels also disagree regarding what happened after the events at the tomb. The women, according to Matthew, ran to bring news to the disciples, who believed them and went to Galilee to be reunited with Christ (Mt. 28:8-10, 16). According to Mark, Mary Magdalene went to bring the news to the disciples, who believed neither her nor the two other disciples to whom Jesus appeared, until Jesus appeared to all eleven of them and rebuked them for their unbelief (Mk. 16:10-14). According to Luke, the disciples did not believe the report that the women brought to them. Peter, however, ran to the tomb and found it empty (Lk. 24:11-12). Only later did Jesus appear in the midst of the disciples gathered in Jerusalem, and he ate broiled fish in their presence (Lk. 24:36-43). (Somewhat sarcastically, Ibn Hazm notes that Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples in order to get food to satisfy his hunger!). In contradistinction to all the other evangelists, John depicts Jesus as appearing first to ten of the disciples (Thomas being absent) and then to all eleven (Jn. 20:19-29). Such discrepancies, Ibn Hazm notes, show conclusively that the gospels contain lies and cannot possibly have come from reliable persons [2:53-54].

6. Contradictions within Gospels

Discrepancies can be found not only between the gospels but within them as well. Ibn Hazm adduces examples from the gospels of Matthew and John to prove this point.

In Matthew, for example, Jesus asserts that he came not to abolish the prophets but to fulfill them, that not even an iota or a dot of the Law will be annulled until heaven and earth pass away, and that anyone who relaxes one of the least of the commandments will be called least in the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 5:17-19). And yet, just a few verses later, he himself dissents from the traditional view of divorce and presents a new law opposed to that given by Moses (Mt. 5:31-32) [2:21].

Moreover, at one point in Matthew's gospel Jesus gives the power of loosing and binding to Peter alone, only later to give it to all the apostles (among whom was Judas!) (cf. Mt. 16:18, 18:18). At an even more basic level, the whole idea of giving *anyone* the power to loose and bind contradicts Jesus' earlier declaration that nothing in the Law could be changed [2:22].

The issue of how to deal with offenses committed against oneself also receives contradictory treatment in Matthew. At first Jesus instructs his followers to confront an offending brother personally; and if he does not repent of his wrongdoing, to call him to accountability in the presence of one or two witnesses; and if that still does not inspire contrition, to take him before the whole church; and if he does not listen even to the church, to ostracize him "as a Gentile and a tax collector" (Mt. 18:15-17). Only a few verses later, however, Jesus calls for unqualified forgiveness of wrongs, telling his disciples to forgive an offending brother "seventy times seven" times (Mt. 18:21). These two directives are obviously at variance with each other [2:43].

In his gospel, John clearly states that "no one has ever seen God" (Jn. 1:18). But if God became flesh and dwelt among them in the person of Christ (cf. Jn. 1:14), how can it be said that no one has ever seen God? Obviously people saw Christ [2:63]. Jesus himself uses this line of argument. When his disciples requested that he show them the Father, he responded, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn. 14:9) [2:67]. Thus the gospel contradicts itself; it claims that God cannot be seen and yet is seen in Christ.

Elsewhere in John's gospel Jesus says, "I can do nothing on my own authority; as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me" (Jn. 5:30). Obviously Christ is here claiming that he issues no judgment of his own but only promulgates the judgment he hears from his Father. The same notion is implied elsewhere in John's gospel when Jesus says that the Father bears witness to whatever judgment he makes (cf. Jn. 8:16-18). How, Ibn Hazm asks, do these assertions accord with the statements that the Father judges no one and has consigned all judgment to the Son (cf. Jn. 5:22, 27) [2:65, 67]? Furthermore, how can Jesus' statement in John's gospel that "my Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14:28) be harmonized with other statements in the same gospel that Christ is equal to God [2:65]? An even more obvious contradiction is to be found between Jesus' purported assertions "if I bear witness to myself, my testimony is not true" and "even if I do bear witness to myself, my testimony is true," both in John's gospel (cf. Jn. 5:31, 8:14). Is it any wonder, Ibn Hazm

notes, that with such contradictory teachings many of Jesus' disciples left him? Even John himself admits as much (e.g., Jn. 6:66) [2:66]!

7. Absurdities and Falsehoods

Also militating against the authenticity of the New Testament are the many absurd and factually inaccurate statements found in it.

In building his argument in this regard, Ibn Hazm starts at the very beginning of the New Testament text. As we have noted earlier, he finds the genealogy of Mt. 1 fallacious in that it traces the ancestry of Joseph, not of Jesus. Jesus, Ibn Hazm avers, had no more place in the generations listed by Matthew than he had in the generations of the people of China or India! Matthew also gives false information regarding the number of generations leading up to the birth of Jesus. Mt. 1:17 says that there were fourteen generations from Abraham to David—a falsehood since David cannot be counted in the list of his own ancestors; thus, from Abraham to David there were only thirteen generations. Nor were there fourteen generations from David to the deportation. Matthew himself says that Jeconiah was deported (Mt. 1:11); how can he then be counted in the generations *before* the deportation? And if David is counted in this set of generations, then the previous count of fourteen generations is in error. Perhaps, in order to come up with the right number of generations, Ibn Hazm sarcastically suggests, we should say that Jeconiah was his own father—something obviously too absurd to consider. Then Matthew claims that there were fourteen generations from the deportation to Christ. Again he is in error. There are only twelve generations; even if Jeconiah is included in this count, there are only thirteen! "Marvel then," Ibn Hazm concludes, "at this imbecility and error!" [2:13].

Furthermore, Matthew's claim that David is a descendant of Nahson, son of Aminadab, cannot be true. Nahson was among those who left Egypt in the exodus (Num. 1:7); he therefore did not enter the Holy Land (cf. Num. 14:23, Dt. 1:35). Thus from the time his son Salmon entered Canaan until the birth of David, according to Matthew, only four generations had passed (Salmon begot Boaz, Boaz begot Obed, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David). Yet Jews and Christians both maintain that from the entry into the land until David 573¹⁴ years elapsed. For the lineage to be as Matthew claims, Salmon would have had to enter Canaan at less than one year of age and then none of the

other ancestors of David could have had their son at an age less than 140-and-some. But the books of Kings and Chronicles, as well as others, state that after Moses no one lived even to the age of 130 except "Yahura!"¹⁵ Ibn Hazm expresses his amazement at how many falsehoods just this short pericope of Mt. 1 contains. The Christians, he says, avoid one error only to fall into another [2:14]!

Matthew's text manifests yet more absurdity when it depicts Satan as asking the Creator (whom Christians consider Jesus, as God, to be) to worship him (Mt. 4:9). Such impiety and stupidity is unmatched throughout the centuries! How could the devil, Ibn Hazm asks, tempt the Lord of all the universe with the possession of worldly things? Such things could be said only by someone who should be locked up in an insane asylum or by someone who wants to mock imbecilic people [2:17]!

Another falsehood and absurdity is to be found in the statement, supposedly made by Jesus, that anyone who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward (Mt. 10:41). This statement offends Ibn Hazm's understanding of divine justice. In the future life one will receive a reward commensurate with his or her moral excellence in this life. Those of similar attainments in this life will receive similar rewards in the next. It is therefore absurd to hold that someone, just by following a prophet (this is apparently how Ibn Hazm interprets "receiving" a prophet) will receive the same reward as the prophet! This would mean that all the faithful would be exactly equal in the future life. Such a notion is untenable. This would mean that all Christians would be the same as Peter, Paul, Mark, and Luke—something no Christian will admit! Thus, Ibn Hazm concludes, "their God" lied if he made a statement like the one recorded in their New Testament [2:29-30].

Furthermore, lies can be found in statements which Jesus, according to Matthew, made about John the Baptist. Jesus supposedly claimed that John was "more than a prophet," of whom it was written, "I send my angel before you!"¹⁶ (Mt. 11:9-10; cf. Mal. 3:1). Two lies are involved here, Ibn Hazm asserts. The first is that John was more than a prophet. Only two possibilities can be admitted: either he was inspired by God or he was not. And if he was inspired by God, he was nothing more than a prophet. The second lie is that John was an angel. John was only a man; after living, he died, something that does not

¹⁵This name is not found in the Hebrew Bible. In all likelihood, the spelling given here represents a typesetter's error. Ibn Hazm is surely referring to Jehoiada, who, according to 2 Chron. 24:15, lived to the age of 130.

¹⁶The RSV renders this passage: "I send my messenger before thy face."

¹⁴How Ibn Hazm arrives at this figure is uncertain. See p. 81, note 38, above.

happen to angels. This very next verse says as much, stating specifically that John was "born of woman" (Mt. 11:11). But this verse too contains its own absurdity: it states that even though among all those born of women no one is greater than John, even the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. "Meditate on this passage," Ibn Hazm invites his reader, "and see the calamity of the centuries falling upon the Christians, filling their enemies with joy." Not even a child or the most stupid maidservant (unless she had a diseased mind) would say such a thing. Who could seriously maintain that all who enter the kingdom of heaven are greater than John? Christ, Ibn Hazm concludes, could never have said anything so stupid as this [2:30-31]!

Furthermore, this pericope of Matthew, only a few verses later, maintains that prophecy came to an end with John (cf. Mt. 11:13). This assertion is objectionable to Ibn Hazm on two counts. First, as a Muslim he cannot assent to the assertion that prophecy ended before Muhammad. Second, this passage only adds to the confusion regarding John's prophethood. Here he is considered a prophet, and the last of the prophets, even though in the gospel of John he is reported to have denied any prophetic status whatsoever (Jn. 1:21). So sometimes he is not a prophet; at other times he is a prophet and the last of the prophets; and at other times he is greater than a prophet [2:31] (cf. p. 116, above)!

In the same section of Matthew's gospel, Jesus is portrayed as saying that "John came neither eating nor drinking" while he himself is condemned for eating and drinking (Mt. 11:18-19). Ibn Hazm finds it difficult to accept the authenticity of this passage. In the first place, Jesus' assertion is false. John indeed did eat—locusts and honey, we are told elsewhere in the New Testament (Mk. 1:6). And if John did not eat or drink, while Christ did, that would make the former greater than the latter, a notion that Christians would deny [2:31-32].

Other lies and absurdities are readily detectable in the Christian scriptures. If, for example, one takes seriously Jesus' assertion that "no one knows the Father except the Son,"¹⁷ he would have to admit that Christians do not know God and are thus infidels! Besides, these words imply that among all the angels and past prophets, no one knew God! If Christ said such a thing, he lied—something he could not have done. Therefore we must conclude that Matthew either lied or was ignorant [2:32-33].

¹⁷Ibn Hazm does not consider the rest of this verse, which would seem to undermine his argument: "...no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Mt. 11:27b).

Or who could believe the fallacious and absurd promise made later in Matthew's gospel to the effect that if any two people agree regarding anything they ask of God, it will be granted to them (Mt. 18:19)? Whether this is directed specifically to the disciples or to all believers in Christ, it is demonstrably false. The disciples asked for things that were not granted to them; and if it is objected that they did not in fact ask for these things, then they can be faulted for not seeking the things needed by their people [2:42].

Ibn Hazm notes how even Christian doctrine itself renders certain New Testament statements absurd. The Christian scriptures teach that in the resurrection, people will be like the angels, neither marrying nor being given in marriage (Mt. 22:30). Christians teach this idea of a non-physical existence in heaven. Yet Jesus tells his disciples that he will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until he drinks it anew with them in the kingdom (cf. Mt. 26:29, Mk. 14:25) and that they will eat and drink at his table in the kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Lk. 22:30). Despite these latter passages, Ibn Hazm notes, Christians deny that they will partake of physical food and drink in paradise. They thus contradict Christ while confessing that he is Lord and God! But why should they contradict him thus, Ibn Hazm asks sarcastically? After all, the Torah, which Christians accept as part of their scripture, depicts the angels who visited Abraham as eating and drinking (Gen. 18:7-8). Their New Testament describes Christ, after his return from the dead, as eating and drinking (e.g., in Lk. 24:36-43). So why should men not eat and drink in paradise? And if God could choose a woman and have a son by her (as Christians maintain that he did with Mary), then why should men not take women in paradise [2:44-46]? The Christian scriptures are so replete with absurdity that even Christian doctrine itself points to their inauthenticity!¹⁸

Also absurd is Jesus' promise recorded in gospels (cf. Mt. 19:29, Mk. 10:29-30, Lk. 18:29-30) that those who have left everything and followed him will receive in this world a hundredfold replacement of what they have abandoned (not to mention eternal life in the world to come). Even if, for the sake of argument, one concedes that the brothers and sisters, mothers and children of Jesus' followers are replaced by their many fellow believers, how can they receive enough lands and

¹⁸What makes Lk. 22:30 even more absurd, Ibn Hazm argues, is that Christ, in assuring the twelve that they will judge the twelve tribes of Israel, obviously includes even the wicked Judas in his promise! Either Judas did not sin in betraying Christ (something the New Testament itself denies; cf. Mt. 26:24), or Christ lied in this promise. One conclusion or the other is inescapable! [2:45-46].

houses to replace their former ones a hundredfold? This is simply impossible, an untenable absurdity [2:55].

Equally absurd is the promise Jesus supposedly made to his disciples that in going out into the world to preach the gospel, they will be able to cast out demons, speak in new tongues, pick up deadly serpents and drink poison without harm, and cure the sick by laying hands on them (Mk. 16:15). Obviously, this promise was a lie since none of the Christians do these things. (One tradition, Ibn Hazm notes, even holds that John the Evangelist died of poisoning!) But how could anyone maintain that Christ, as a prophet (let alone God, as the Christians hold!), made a false promise? Obviously it was Mark, not Christ, who lied [2:55-56].

The absurdities of the first chapter of John's gospel astound Ibn Hazm, beginning with the very first verse: "the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). How could the Word be God if it was with God? It is stated further that "that which was made was life in it" (Jn. 1:4).¹⁹ How could this be? This passage presents the absurdity that the life of God, existing in the Word, is created, even though the Word is God! This implies that God is subject to created accidents within himself—a fallacious teaching [2:61-62]. John states further that "he (Christ) was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not" (Jn. 1:10). Yet more nonsense! How could Christ be in the same world that he created? If Christ is God, as the Christians teach, then it is improper to say that the world was created *through* him; it must be said that he created the world. God save us, Ibn Hazm exclaims, from assuming that God needed to create by means of some instrument or that God creates alongside some other creator [2:62].²⁰

And how is one to make sense of Christ's statement that he lays down his life that he may take it up again (or, as Ibn Hazm renders it, "I kill my soul and I revive it") (Jn. 10:17)? How is it possible, he asks, for one who is dead to revive himself [2:68]?

¹⁹This is a grammatically acceptable translation of the Latin original (see the Excursus following Chapter VII): *quod factum est in ipso vita erat*. Another translation includes the *quod factum est* ("that was made") with the previous phrase, so that the text is rendered "without him was not anything made that was made; in him was life..." Ibn Hazm's translation takes the *quod factum est* as initiating a new phrase, so that the text reads "without him was not anything made. That which was made was life in him..."

²⁰Ibn Hazm's text of the gospel of John renders Jn. 10:37 as follows: "I create and my Father creates. If I am not doing the works that my Father does, you do not believe me." The *textus receptus* does not include the first sentence of this verse. Its inclusion in the version he is using leads Ibn Hazm to interpret this passage as asserting that Christ mimics his Father, creating the same thing that his Father has. He considers such a notion to be a "positive stupidity" [2:62].

Ibn Hazm next turns to Paul's epistles which, like the gospels, present some jarring absurdities. For example, in Galatians Paul teaches that if one receives circumcision, Christ provides no advantage for him and he is obliged to keep the whole Law (Gal. 5:2-3). But were not Paul and all Christ's disciples circumcised? If Paul's teaching is to be taken seriously, one must conclude that Christ was of no use to them and that they were obliged to keep the entire Law. Besides, Ibn Hazm claims, the same would apply to most Christians living among Muslims in his day in that, as a rule, they too were circumcised. Thus Paul renders Christianity useless for most Christians! Obviously he lied—and yet the Christians take their religion from him [2:70]!

Ibn Hazm also finds Paul's wish that he be "accursed from Christ" in place of his fellow Jews (Rom. 9:3) to be absurd. Who is stopping him, Ibn Hazm asks, from rejecting Christ and attaining his desire [2:71]?

The Christian propensity toward falsehood and absurdity did not stop with the text of the New Testament. Ibn Hazm mentions the tale (which he attributes to John Chrysostom²¹) that the fig tree from which Adam ate was the same tree from which Jesus' cross was made. Supposedly John Chrysostom offers as proof of this tale's veracity the fact that one will never find a cave without a fig tree growing at its opening. "Marvel at this shameless and droll buffoonery!" Ibn Hazm exclaims [2:72].

Moreover, Ibn Hazm finds the doctrine of vicarious atonement to be nonsensical. How can Christians maintain that Christ came to bear the pains and sins of all by his wounds? Christians still suffer pains and commit sins just as other men do, thus contradicting this tenet of their religion [2:73].

Ibn Hazm also deems false and absurd the Christian legend that Helena, the mother of Constantine, found in Jerusalem, more than three hundred years after the ascension of Christ, the true cross, the crown of thorns, the blood that flowed from Christ's side, and the nails that pierced his hands. How can this be, he asks, considering that the Christians had been driven out of Jerusalem and killed and that the city had been abandoned for more than two hundred years? How could any trace of these things remain intact in a city that had been depopulated

²¹This tale is a medieval legend not found in any extant text of John Chrysostom. In the liturgical tradition of the Eastern Church, where the liturgy attributed to John Chrysostom had become by this time the usual Eucharistic service, various liturgical texts (for example, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, celebrated on 14 September) compare the tree from which Adam ate to the "tree" on which Christ was crucified (see Nassar 1961 [1938], 294-295, 302-303). It is thus possible that the source from which Ibn Hazm is drawing in this matter, knowing this connection between the trees in Eastern Christian liturgical texts, attributed its origin to John Chrysostom, to whom (whether correctly or incorrectly) so much of Eastern liturgical usage was traced.

for so long? Besides, how did they know that the articles they found were authentic [2:73]?²²

Finally, the Christian contention that Peter, John, Mark, and Paul performed wonders must be false. How could these individuals, who were always fleeing, hiding, and being whipped as atheists, have worked authentic miracles [2:73]?

8. Texts that Escaped Corruption

In addition to all the foregoing indications of the corruption of the Christian scriptures, Ibn Hazm finds yet another. Within the New Testament itself are a number of passages, vestiges of the original, uncorrupted revelation, which contradict Christian doctrine and corroborate tenets of Islamic belief.

In the first place, despite all the corrupt passages contending that Christ is the Son of God, Ibn Hazm discerns passages from the pristine gospel, which taught clearly that Christ was not God but only a prophet and messenger of God. For example, in the gospel of John, Christ refers to himself as "a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God" (Jn. 8:40), thus clearly affirming his humanity and his status as messenger [2:67]. The same is indicated in Jn. 12:48, in which Christ describes himself as one sent by the Father, speaking only what he has been told to speak [2:29]. In portraying himself specifically as a *prophet* without honor in his homeland (cf. Mt. 13:57, Mk. 6:4, Lk. 4:24, Jn. 4:44), Christ is foretelling, according to Ibn Hazm, the very doctrinal deviations of the Christians (regarding his divinity) that would dishonor him [2:36; cf. 59]. In their present doctrine, Christians contradict what the early disciples believed about Christ, as shown in the story of the encounter on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-26), in which the disciples characterize Jesus as "a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Lk. 24:19). Why do Christians today, Ibn Hazm asks, not confess the same as these first followers of Christ [2:60-61]?

Furthermore, a clear negation of the Christian tenet that the Son is the Holy Spirit²³ is to be found in Christ's assertion that whoever sins

²²The legend includes details aimed at proving the authenticity of the cross. According to the traditional account, all three crosses (that on which Jesus was crucified, as well as the two on which the thieves were crucified on Jesus' left and right [Mt. 27:38, Mk. 15:27]) were touched to the body of a dead man. Two of the crosses did nothing; the third, however, revived the man, thereby showing itself to be the cross of Christ (Velimirović 1985, 3:328-329).

²³It is not clear to which Christian doctrine Ibn Hazm is here referring. Trinitarian Christians do not equate the Son and Holy Spirit; they do, however, maintain that Christ remained present in the Church after his ascension by virtue

against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever sins against the Holy Spirit will not (cf. Mt. 12:31, Mk. 3:28-29, Lk. 12:10). An obvious distinction between the human Jesus and the divine Spirit is being made here, according to Ibn Hazm; the two cannot be equated [2:59].

Further proof of the corruption of the Christian scriptures is provided by Jesus' instruction to his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15). The use of the singular "gospel" here, Ibn Hazm argues, shows that Christ gave his disciples a single gospel, which later was lost through distortion by various writers; the result is that present-day Christians have four gospels which contradict one another [2:55].

D. Conclusion

A comparison of this chapter with Chapter III indicates that Ibn Hazm claims to find many of the same flaws in the Christian scriptures as he did in the Jewish ones, flaws such as faulty textual transmission, discrepancies between and within various books, disrespectful attitudes toward the prophets (in the case of the New Testament, specifically against Christ), absurdities, falsehoods, divine filiation, and *shirk*. However, he develops the last two criticisms much more fully in his treatment of the Christian texts than in his analysis of their Jewish counterparts. Because of the Christian doctrine of Christ's divine Sonship and co-equality with the Father, Ibn Hazm levels the charge of polytheism much more forcefully against the Christians than against the Jews. Christians are thus seen as much more guilty of blasphemy because they not only commit the sin of *shirk* by attributing an associate to God but also "dilute" the divine attributes by depicting Christ, as the purportedly divine Son of God, as imperfect and limited in his powers.

In general, one senses less restraint in Ibn Hazm's critique of the Gospel than in his critique of the Torah. One reason for this is that he feels less compelled to respect the text of the New Testament because it, unlike the Torah, cannot boast prophetic authorship; even though its teachings are supposedly based on the teaching of a prophet (i.e., Christ), it was not written by Christ in the way that the Torah, in Ibn Hazm's view, was composed by Moses himself. Nevertheless, Ibn Hazm considers more texts in the Gospel than in the Torah to be trustworthy. He deems the text of the Torah now possessed by the Jews

of the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Son is present in the Holy Spirit, according to Trinitarian doctrine, because of "circumcession" (Gr. *perichoresis*), the property by which the persons of the Trinity exist reciprocally in one another. It is apparently to this aspect of Christian teaching that Ibn Hazm is objecting.

to have "absolutely nothing of authentic revelation" [1:224],²⁴ on the other hand, as noted above, he cites a number of New Testament passages he deems authentic, i.e., free of the corrupting effects of *tahrif*.

These minor concessions notwithstanding, Ibn Ḥazm clearly considers the Gospel and other Christian texts, no less than the Torah and other Jewish texts, as utterly unreliable sources of authentic religious doctrine and practice.

²⁴As we noted in Chapter II, many earlier authors found numerous testimonies to Muhammad's prophethood in the Hebrew Bible. In the *Treatise*, however, Ibn Ḥazm briefly alludes to only one, Ps. 72:16. (He also understands Ps. 72:10 as referring to the Muslim practice of the *diya*, i.e., the payment of blood money by a murderer to the family of the victim.) [1:207]. This dearth of "proof texts" from the Hebrew Bible is not surprising in light of the fact that the *Treatise* was composed for the explicit purpose of discrediting the earlier scriptures as thoroughly as possible. Elsewhere in the *Fisal*, however, where this purpose is much less conspicuous, Ibn Ḥazm does mention several other proofs of Muhammad's prophethood to be found in the Jewish scriptures, viz., Is. 66:18-21, Dt. 18:18, Dt. 32:2, and Dan. 2:31-45 [1:102, 111-112].

CHAPTER V

Ibn Ḥazm's Characterization of Jews and Christians

Undergirding the polemic of the *Treatise* described in the two previous chapters are its author's well-defined views of Jews and Christians. In this chapter we shall examine how Ibn Ḥazm perceives these two communities.

We shall see that he attempts to build his case against Jews and Christians on anti-*dhimmi* prejudices which he assumes were held by many of his coreligionists in al-Andalus. Furthermore, he links *dhimmis* with Islamic sects he considers to be heretical, striving to discredit both groups through mutual association. By evoking his readers' prejudices and then using rhetorical techniques to confirm them, he hopes to intensify opposition to Jews and Christians.

A. Ibn Ḥazm's Description of Encounters with *Dhimmi* Sages

To some extent, Ibn Ḥazm's opinion of Jews and Christians may have been affected by specifically polemical encounters with them. As we saw in the two preceding chapters, Ibn Ḥazm claims to have challenged *dhimmi* sages (*ʿulamāʾ*) on matters of doctrine.

He explicitly refers to public debates he had with Jews [1:142]. For instance, he recalls asking Samuel ibn Nagrela how Abraham could marry his own sister, as the Torah claims (Gen. 20:12). According to Ibn

Hazm, Ibn Nagrela argued that the word *ukht* in the text in question, usually taken to mean "sister," could simply mean "female relative," an argument which Ibn Hazm says he promptly refuted on the basis of the text itself, in which Abraham describes Sarah as "the daughter of my father" (cf. Gen. 20:12). In the course of this debate, Ibn Hazm conceded that one could argue that such a marriage, though considered illicit in later periods, was licit in Abraham's time; this argument could be used, however, only if one accepted the principle of abrogation, something which Ibn Nagrela refused to do. "With that," Ibn Hazm concludes, "my adversary became upset and said nothing more" [1:135]. In a similar vein, Ibn Hazm recalls debating with a Jew, whose name he does not provide, regarding the illicit union between Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38) [1:147].

He also mentions an encounter with one of the wise men of the Jews in connection with his discussion of the census figures given in the Torah. This sage supposedly attempted to justify the figures (which Ibn Hazm considered wildly inflated), only to have his arguments dismissed with Ibn Hazm's remark, "Enough of your sophisms. Your own Torah has closed all escape routes to you!" [1:174].

When Ibn Hazm faulted the Israelites for failing to obey the divine command regarding circumcision during their wanderings in the desert (cf. Jos. 5:23), one Jewish sage, according to the text of the *Treatise*, attempted to counter the criticism by claiming that the Israelites were excused from the stipulation because they were travelling. Ibn Hazm rejected the sage's argument, noting that Israel had not been constantly on the move but had stayed in the same place for long periods of time [1:205].

Ibn Hazm also claims to have debated other points with Jews. He mentions how he dismissed as "a cute suggestion" one Jew's argument that the Song of Songs (considered incomprehensible by Ibn Hazm) was really an allegory of alchemy [1:207-208]. Furthermore, he records how Jewish sages responded to his charges that the Jews teach *shirk*. To his argument that the depiction of Wisdom in the book of Proverbs as co-existing with God at creation amounts to ascribing an associate to God, one Jew responded that Wisdom here is to be seen only as the knowledge of God. Ibn Hazm rejected his defense, noting that it was not consonant with what the text itself said [1:208]. Similarly, Ibn Hazm records how one rabbi responded to his attack on the Jewish idea of Metatron by contending that Metatron was merely an angel, not a "lesser god"—an interpretation that Ibn Hazm was unwilling to accept [1:223].

The text of the *Treatise* also makes several references to Ibn Hazm's polemical encounters with Christian sages. In discussing the New Testament's claim that "if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed

... nothing will be impossible to you" (Mt. 17:20), Ibn Hazm charged that Christians cannot claim to have even minuscule faith since they can perform none of the wonders that Christ promised the faithful would be able to do. We are told that, in response to this charge, one Christian sage argued that *great* faith is required to work such wonders since a mustard tree is very large. Ibn Hazm readily confuted him by noting that the text does not refer to the mustard *tree* but only to a mustard *seed* [2:41].

He claims that he confronted another Christian sage about the discrepancies among the statements in the gospels regarding who carried the cross to Golgotha. (According to the synoptics, it was Simon of Cyrene; according to John, Jesus himself.) This sage argued that the cross was so large that both Simon and Jesus bore it. Ibn Hazm refuted this attempt to harmonize the contradictory accounts on the grounds that it found no support in the texts themselves. It would be better, he says, to hold that each carried the cross part of the way [2:49-50].

Ibn Hazm refers to yet another confrontation with a Christian sage, though not one that he himself had experienced. In assessing the description in the New Testament of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem on a she-ass and her colt (Mt. 21:1-7), he relates a story that had been told him by his friend al-Husayn ibn Bāqī. According to Ibn Bāqī, a Christian sage with whom he spoke maintained that the story of Christ's riding upon an ass was merely an allegory: the ass represented the Torah. When he heard this sage's argument, Ibn Bāqī laughed and retorted, "Then the gospel must be the colt!" [2:44].

It is difficult to determine whether these encounters actually occurred. Three interpretations are possible. First, Ibn Hazm may be giving accurate descriptions of what actually transpired. Second, his descriptions may be complete fabrications. Third, they may be based on personal experiences but "recast" to serve his rhetorical purposes more effectively; that is, they may be literary inventions derived from certain "core experiences," the exact nature of which we cannot determine.

The way his opponents so submissively acquiesce to his arguments in these accounts makes the first interpretation unlikely; his opponents could certainly have made better cases for their positions than those attributed to them. The second interpretation also seems unlikely: to assume that Ibn Hazm never engaged Christian or Jewish sages in debate ignores the social configuration of al-Andalus, in which social and political intercourse among Jews, Christians, and Muslims was far from uncommon. In view of Ibn Hazm's combative nature, it is likely that he actively sought out opportunities to debate non-Muslims. The third interpretation, therefore, seems to be the most realistic: in his

accounts Ibn Hazm extrapolates from actual experiences, re-telling them to support his position.

In any case, the "historicity" of Ibn Hazm's accounts is of little importance. What really matters is his intention in presenting them as he does. Even if they consist largely of literary invention, his depictions of non-Muslim opponents are meant to portray Jews and Christians in a manner which supports his rhetorical agenda. Let us now consider his depiction of each of these groups in turn.

B. Characterization of Jews

In one sense, Ibn Hazm perceives the Jews as unwitting victims of a deceitful or unlearned forebear.¹ The Jews as a people are not responsible for the corruption of the pristine revelation given to Moses by God. Their error, rather, is due to gullibility, i.e., accepting the scripture as altered by that "impious person, false and mocking, who fooled the Jews and played a bad trick on them, writing for them such things that were sufficient cause for God's showing his anger against them not only in time, i.e., in this life, but also in the future life, condemning them to eternal fire" [1:128]. Ibn Hazm admits that the error propagated by this deceiver may have been more the result of stupidity in such disciplines as arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and theology than of deliberate malice [1:128; cf. 129]. In any case, Judaism's falsehoods are the outcome of this initial deception and subsequent acceptance of it by later generations. This is Ibn Hazm's most temperate evaluation of the Jews, colored more by pity than by disdain. The Jews are seen more as unfortunate dupes than as malevolent proponents of error.

This temperate view, however, pales in comparison to his more vituperative characterization of the Jews. He rails at them for not having been able to overcome their ancestral deception. What accounts for this inability? In responding to this question, he discredits the people of Israel in three ways.

First, he builds on his audience's biases against their Jewish contemporaries. By caricaturing the Jews of his own day, Ibn Hazm hopes his readers will "retroject" such negative valuation back through all of Jewish history. Thus he vilifies the Jews, depicting them as perfidious and treacherous [1:138]; as filthy, vile, barbarically unfaithful, and atrociously foolish [1:154]; as imbecilic, impious, and lying [1:217].²

¹As noted earlier, Ibn Hazm considers Ezra to be this ancestral culprit.

²Such qualities explain the Jews' excessive (yet fickle) devotion to Moses. They followed him because he led them from their abject state of existence in Egypt

He claims that they are the most duplicitous of all the peoples of the earth and claims never to have met two who were spontaneously sincere [1:156]. He impugns their intelligence. In one acerbic passage he draws an analogy: the intelligence of the Jews in comparison with that of all other peoples is like the smell of garlic in comparison with all other smells [1:180]. The following passage epitomizes his attempt to depict the Jews of his time negatively:

There is no greater wonder than that they make themselves children of God. All who know them know that they are the dirtiest of nations in clothing, the most inane in appearance. They are most wretched, abominable, perfect in wickedness. They are the greatest in deceit, most cowardly of spirit, strongest in despicableness, most deceitful of tongue, weakest of determination, and most frivolous of character. God forbid this foul election! [1:201-202].

Second, he discredits the Jews by associating them with other groups deemed objectionable by his audience. When bringing charges of *shirk* and divine filiation against the Jews, he links them with Christians. In asking how Isaac's blessing, meant for Esau, could be effective for Jacob (Gen. 27:1-40), Ibn Hazm compares the Torah's claim in this regard to the Shi'ites' claim that Gabriel had been sent by God to 'Alī but mistakenly gave his message to Muḥammad. "Curses," he concludes, "on both Jews and Shi'ites!" [1:138]. In such arguments, Ibn Hazm is clearly attempting to render the Jews guilty by association.

Third, he criticizes the Jews for their factiousness. It is largely for this reason that they are unable to break away from their irrational attachment to obviously fallacious doctrines. They put group solidarity (*ʿashabiya*) above reason, forming religious opinions on the basis of fanaticism and blind submission to the authority of their forebears rather than on rational grounds [1:116]; passion and whim, therefore, overcome rationality. Furthermore, they refuse to adjure error and embrace the truth of Islam because they wish to ensure the continuation of their elevated status in the world (*istidāma li-riyāsati dunyawīya*) [1:116]. Being a Jew, according to Ibn Hazm, had its prerogatives, prerogatives not readily relinquished even for the sake of truth.

In short, Ibn Hazm characterizes the Jews as unfortunate recipients of a religion corrupted by some deceitful or imbecilic forebear

(a state not suitable even for "a free dog or a neglected ass") to well-being and prosperity. Thus they submitted to him for completely self-serving reasons. Nevertheless, their obedience to him was defective, weak, and intermittent (cf. Ex. 32:4, Num. 14:4). They exaggerate Moses' prophecy and miracles, inflating his true significance, which is assessed accurately in the Qur'ān [1:202-203].

who altered their scriptures. Reason should enable them to see the error of their received tradition, but their pervasively flawed character (one need only look at the Jews around you, Ibn Hazm tells his audience, to see it), their similarity to other infidels (e.g., Christians and Shi'ites), and their self-serving factiousness hinder them from doing so.

C. Characterization of Christians

Ibn Hazm develops his negative image of Christians in several ways. First, he affirms that Christians are stupid, lacking intelligence and the ability to reason rigorously. Second, he depicts them as arbitrary in their beliefs and practices, lacking authentication for their religious tradition. Third, he argues that many aspects of Christianity are inferior to analogous aspects of other religious traditions. Finally, he discredits Christians by linking them with other heretics. Let us consider in turn each of these reproaches.

1. Christians as Stupid and Irrational

From the very beginning of the section of the *Treatise* dealing with the Christian scriptures, Ibn Hazm makes it clear that he intends to show how Christians "lack intelligence" and how someone of even the slightest intelligence could see the falsehood of their religion [2:2]. Several of the "exclamations" cited above clearly attribute "stupidity" (*huma*) and "frivolity" (*ru'una*) to Christians [cf. 2:13-14, 17, 35].

Elsewhere the depiction is even more unflattering. For example, at one point in his discussion of Mt. 4:1-11, Ibn Hazm writes that what is claimed in the New Testament about Satan's ability to tempt Jesus (whom Christians, he notes, consider to be the Lord of the whole world!) could be uttered only by those who should be detained in an insane asylum or who, because of their gross impiety, want only to mock imbeciles [2:17]. Regarding the use of the title "Son of Man" in the New Testament, Ibn Hazm flatly states that it is stupid for Christians to say that God (namely the Christians' divine Jesus) is the son of a man [2:24]. Similarly, he asserts that his arguments against Christ's divinity (based on a critique of the description in the New Testament of Jesus' agony in the garden of Gethsemane and of his cry "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" made during his passion on the cross) should be sufficient for "anyone who has intelligence" [2:61]. Christians do not accept these arguments, he implies, because they lack such intelligence. Likewise, it is only a person lacking intelligence who could be taken in by the Christian ideals of asceticism and martyrdom; but

then no one, he observes, is more obstinate than a fool who lives in blind submission to authority, especially if he is an arbitrary and weak person [2:74]. Finally, he ends his argument against the Christians by assailing them for acquiescing to human authority rather than using the reason which God has provided to serve (along with revealed texts and the consensus of the Prophet's companions) as a criterion between truth and falsehood [2:74-75].

2. Christian Belief and Practice as Arbitrary

Ibn Hazm is offended by the changeability of Christian tradition, which he considers to be a clear indication of its arbitrariness. In other words, because Christianity lacks a firm basis of authentication, it can be changed at the whim of its leaders, whose dictates Christians obey in violation of the dictates of reason and of Christ's explicit teaching.

For example, according to the Christian scriptures, Christ specifically told his disciples that anyone who becomes angry with his brother is liable to judgment and that anyone who sins with his right eye should pluck it out (cf. Mt. 5:22, 29). These, Ibn Hazm contends, are clear legal prescriptions from Christ, yet Christians feel no obligation to comply; in failing to obey, they contradict Christ himself. And this is only a minor example. Christians also fail to comply with the laws of circumcision, fasting, and the celebration of Passover observed by Christ and his disciples. Moreover, Christians changed the weekly holy day from Saturday to Sunday. In all these things they show inconstancy and infidelity. In their own defense, Ibn Hazm notes, Christians usually argue that they behave as they do because Christ told them to obey their leaders. However, their argument does not hold. If their patriarchs today ordered them to return to all the aforementioned observances practiced by Christ, he asks, would they obey [2:23]? Their religion has no real foundation; they simply follow the whims of their leaders [2:24].

Other examples of the way Christians ignore Christ's explicit commands can be found. While telling his disciples to "call no man on earth your father" (cf. Mt. 28:8-9), the New Testament itself names the earthly fathers of various disciples [2:46]. Despite Christ's teaching to reject riches (as evidenced in his teaching that it is harder for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter heaven [cf. Mk. 10:25]), Christians embrace luxurious lifestyles—and the worst offenders among them in this regard are their leaders! "Never," Ibn Hazm remarks, "have we seen people more avaricious in hoarding riches...in treasuring and guarding them without getting any benefit

from them or doing works of charity with them, than the bishops, priests, and monks of every monastery, church, country, and epoch!" According to Christ's words, none of them will enter heaven [2:54]! Moreover, near the conclusion of the *Treatise*, Ibn Hazm argues that for more than one hundred years following Christ, Christians maintained a forty-day fast in January and observed the Passover with the Jews.³ Only later, he contends, did five of their patriarchs⁴ change these practices in favor of the ones presently observed [2:72].

What opinion, he asks, should one have of a religion that deems the practices of Christ and his apostles erroneous and whose present laws are the fabrications of their bishops and kings? Can anyone of any intelligence continue practicing such a religion? How can people believe that they can find God through the practice of a religion whose tenets have been determined by mere human beings and not by God himself or by a revelation transmitted by a prophet [2:72]?⁵ Such a religion is based on nothing more than authoritarian arbitrariness; its authenticity cannot be established.

Furthermore, lack of authentication renders the tales of miracles useless in establishing the truth of Christianity. These accounts cannot be validated by a verifiable chain of transmission. What Christians say about them differs in no way from what Manicheans say about the wonders worked by Mani or from what the Jews say about the wonders worked by their rabbis and leaders or from what heretical Muslim sects say about their protagonists. All such miracles are apocryphal and invented, Ibn Hazm concludes, because no authentic tradition can establish them [2:73-74].

³Here Ibn Hazm seems to be referring to the practice of the Quartodecimans, who observed the Christian Passover (Pascha, Easter) on the fourteenth of Nisan, the date of the Jewish Passover. This was categorically prohibited by the First Ecumenical Council, held in Nicea in 325. The forty-day fast mentioned here refers to the Lenten period by which Christians prepared for Pascha.

⁴The "five patriarchs" mentioned here apparently refers to the "patriarchal pentarchy" of the church, a concept that emerged in full force in the fourth century. It saw the church in terms of a federation of the apostolic sees of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem. The concept became (and still is) central to Eastern Christian ecclesiology.

⁵Here Ibn Hazm is contrasting the lack of authentication for Christian teachings to the Islamic requirement that a *hadith* have an *isnad* (chain of transmission) which traces its teaching back to Muhammad himself.

3. Christian Inferiority

Ibn Hazm also argues that Christians adhere to a religion that is inferior to other religions in categories which Christians themselves consider central, viz., asceticism and martyrdom.

Christians, he argues, make much of the self-mortification of their monks, but the rigor of Christian monasticism pales in comparison to that found among the ascetics of the Manicheans, Sabeans, Buddhists and Hindus. The bishops, priests and "catholicoi" (*khatāliqa*) of the Christians, Ibn Hazm charges, are the most perverse of men, given to luxury and avarice, "so much so that it is impossible to find even one without these vices" [2:74].

Likewise, Christians have no reason to boast of their martyrs, (whom he defines as those primitive faithful who endured death in defense of their religion and in whose memory Christians consecrate specific holidays) in that their endurance cannot compare with that displayed by their Manichean and Qarmatian counterparts [2:74].⁶

4. Christians and Other Heretics

Finally, Ibn Hazm argues, Christians are of the same ilk as other heretics. As noted above, in his discussion of Christian miracles near the end of the treatise, he puts Christians in the same category as Manicheans, Jews, and Muslim heretics [2:73-74]. In the same vein, near the beginning of his critique of the Christian scriptures, he states that Christian accounts of miracles performed by Peter, John, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or Paul are as much fabrications incapable of authentication as the stories concocted by Manicheans about Mani, by Shi'ites about their imams, and by certain Muslims about their saints (*salihūn*) [2:5].

Similarly, he discredits the apostles by linking them to Shi'ite heretics. How could Muslims even consider the apostles to be true believers? They taught the false doctrine of the divinity of Christ with an extremism (*ghulū*) akin to that of various Muslim sects who teach the divinity of various individuals, e.g., the Saba'ians (*saba'iyya*)⁷ and other

⁶It is interesting to note that Ibn Hazm does not criticize asceticism or martyrdom *per se*, only the "inferior" Christian manifestations of these phenomena.

⁷According to Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī (d. 1153), in his *Kitāb al-mīlāl wa-l-madhal*, the *saba'iyya* are the followers of 'Abdallāh ibn Saba', who supposedly said to 'Alī, "Thou art God." Ibn Saba' is said to have been a Jew who converted to Islam and "from him all kinds of extremism arose" (trans. Kazi/Flynn 1984, 150).

Shi'ites who teach the divinity of 'Alī, the Khattabiāns (khattābiyā)⁸ who teach the divinity of Abū l-Khattāb, and the sectaries of al-Hallāj⁹ who teach his divinity. In general, Ibn Ḥazm asserts, the apostles were of the same stripe as the members of the impious and "esotericist" sects (*bāṭiniyā*),¹⁰ whom he curses. It was, furthermore, under Jewish influence that the apostles corrupted the teaching of Christ (the Jews themselves admit as much), just as the propagandists of the Qarmatians (*qarāmīṭa*)¹¹ and Mashriqiāns (*mashriqīyā*)¹² led the followers of 'Alī astray [2:38]. Indeed, Ibn Ḥazm concludes, the apostles of Christ are to be counted among the "incredulous faction" mentioned in the Qur'an (61:14) [2:39].

By thus associating Christians with other heretics, Ibn Ḥazm accomplishes a twofold polemical purpose. On the one hand, by linking Christians to groups already disdained by his Muslim audience, Ibn Ḥazm impels his readers to extend their disdain to Christians as well. On the other hand, by mentioning in connection with Christianity various Muslim sects which he characterizes as heretical, Ibn Ḥazm discredits these sects; that is, since Muslims would readily repudiate Christians as purveyors of heretical doctrine, his audience would be moved to do the same with those Muslim groups he mentions in the same breath as Christianity. In short, Ibn Ḥazm hopes that his readers will consider all his adversaries as depraved—and thus dismiss them all.

⁸According to al-Shahrastānī, the *khattābiyā* are the followers of Abū l-Khattāb Muḥammad ibn Abū Zaynab al-Asadī al-Ajda' ("the Mutilated One"; d. 755), who at first followed and attributed divinity to Abū 'Abdallāh Ja'far ibn Muḥammad al-Sādiq. The latter, however, dissociated himself from Abū l-Khattāb, who, in time, claimed the imamate and ascribed divinity to himself (trans. Kazi/Flynn 1984, 154).

⁹Al-Hallāj (922) was a famous Islamic mystic, who staunchly defended the Sufi movement from its detractors. In his mystical identification with God, he proclaimed, "I am the truth," which was interpreted as an attribution of divinity to himself. As a result, he was arrested and executed by crucifixion in Baghdad. Various sects of *hallājīyā* arose after his death (see Massignon 1971).

¹⁰The Isma'īlīs, according to al-Shahrastānī, are most commonly known as *bāṭiniyā* (trans. Kazi/Flynn 1984, 165).

¹¹The Qarmatians, an Isma'īlī sect that emerged in Iraq in the late ninth century C.E., took their name from their founding propagandist, Ḥamdān Qarmat. They combined religious gnosticism with revolutionary political doctrine (see Madelung 1978b).

¹²Literally meaning "Easterners," *mashriqīyā* was the name given by Muslim Westerners (*maghribīyā*) to those Arabs and Arabized peoples of the East who moved into the Western territories of *dār al-Islām*. The distinction between the two groups was of special significance in Islamic Spain. Moreover, the term had a specific religious significance, referring primarily to Shi'ites in Ifriqiya after the coming of the Fatimids in the tenth century C.E. (Talbi 1991).

D. Conclusion

As an extension of his critique of the Torah and the Gospel, Ibn Ḥazm attacks those who accept these scriptures as authentic, i.e., the Jews and Christians.

The former he derides as gullible, in that they accepted their ancestor's (i.e., Ezra's) alteration of the pristine revelation given to them by Moses. He further caricatures them as treacherous, vile, foolish, impious, deceitful, and, above all, unquestioningly clannish, i.e., loyal to their community and to the teachings of their forebears, even when reason would require otherwise. They therefore are seen as captive to passion and caprice, rather than as committed to the canons of reason.

The Christians, too, are faulted for their irrationality. He considers them to be stupid and sheepishly submissive to their leaders, who arbitrarily manipulate Christian doctrine and practice. He feels that the Christians' pride in their heritage is misplaced; martyrdom and asceticism in Christianity, Ibn Ḥazm asserts, pale in comparison with these phenomena as manifested in other religions.

Ibn Ḥazm has especially strong contempt for the leaders of the *dhimmi* communities, both those of the past (emphasized in his criticism of the Jews) and those of the present (emphasized in his criticism of the Christians).

One of his techniques in discrediting his opponents is to associate them with one another. Thus, he will often mention the *dhimmi*s and Muslim heretics in the same breath; in doing so he moves his audience to consider them all of the same ilk and equally worthy of scorn.

In the *Treatise* Ibn Ḥazm claims to have debated Jewish and Christian sages at various points in his career. It seems that his derision of Jews and Christians was intensified by such encounters with his *dhimmi* contemporaries. He generalizes his disdain for these opponents to all the members of their respective communities and also retrojects his negative evaluation into the past, so that all Jews and Christians, of the past as well of the present, are maligned.

But why did Ibn Ḥazm feel the need to encourage such antagonism toward the *dhimmi*s? The intensity of his invective is perhaps an "overcompensation" due in part to a sense of insecurity. With the ominous presence of the Christian threat to the north, coupled with the sizeable Christian population in al-Andalus, Christianity presented a constant challenge to Muslim hegemony—not only politically but culturally as well. It seems that certain aspects of Christian culture appealed to various sectors of the Muslim population. Many Muslims were drawn into Christian observances; they seem, for

example, to have participated in Christian festivals and to have frequented Christian churches.¹³ Jewish culture, too, won the

¹³Several texts give clear indication that some Muslims in al-Andalus feared that Christian influence had become too great and that Muslims had grown too accepting of Christian ways.

For instance, a pertinent passage reflecting the situation in Córdoba of the first half of the ninth century is reported in the *Kitāb al-mi'yar al-ma'rib* (*Clarifying Measurements*) of the legal scholar al-Wansharishi (d. 1508). It tells us that a jurist, Abū l-Asbagh 'Isā ibn Muhammad al-Tamili, was asked to render a judgment as to whether it was legitimate for Muslims to participate in the festivities of the Christian New Year, described as "the eve of January, which the people call the Birth [of Jesus], for which they work so hard over the preparations, and which they consider one of the great feast days." Christians, it seems, made special foods on this day, exchanged gifts, and abstained from work. Was it forbidden (*harām*) or merely disapproved (*makrūh*) for a Muslim to accept "from any of his relatives and in-laws any of the food that he prepared" (trans. Melville/Ubaydli 1992, 29)? The very question indicates how familiar Muslims had become with Christians—to the point that intermarriage had produced "mixed" extended families in which certain members were Christian and others Muslim. The jurist answered firmly, determined to neutralize such syncretic tendencies. "It is forbidden to do everything that you have mentioned in your letter," he states, citing an earlier decision of Yahyā ibn Yahyā (d. 848), a prominent Maliki jurist of al-Andalus, to the effect that "[receiving] presents at Christmas from a Christian or from a Muslim is not allowed, neither is accepting invitations on that day, nor is making preparations for it. It should be regarded the same as any other day." He also cites a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad warns that anyone who imitates the ways of the non-Muslims will be mustered with them for judgment on the Last Day (trans. Melville/Ubaydli 1992, 31). The motivation for his decision is clear: social and religious intercourse between Christians and Muslims in al-Andalus had gone beyond acceptable limits; it had to be restricted.

However, it seems that, for the most part, calls for restriction went unheard. Reports of various *muḥtasib*s, officials whose duty it was to detect and punish violation of Islamic law, especially in the markets, indicate that "inappropriate" social mixing between Muslims and *dhimmis* persisted well into the eleventh century. A directive of the *muḥtasib* Ibn 'Abd al-Ra'ī, the date of which is difficult to determine, forbids Muslims to buy meat intentionally from *dhimmi* butchers. The text explicitly condemns the purchase of any meat that Christians slaughter for their churches or in the name of Christ or the cross: "to eat it is to show great regard for their polytheistic ways." Nor were Muslims permitted to partake of food Christians prepared for their funerals or for almsgiving "because they prepared it to glorify their polytheism." A Muslim who buys any property sold by a Christian on behalf of the church is a "bad Muslim" (*muslim ṣā'*). If a Muslim destroys wine belonging to a *dhimmi*, he is to be punished; but any wine that a Muslim has already bought from a *dhimmi* is to be destroyed. Muslims should also avoid travelling on ships with Christians and Jews, lest divine wrath descend upon the vessel (trans. Melville/Ubaydli 1992, 113–115).

In another directive, Ibn 'Abdūn, a *muḥtasib* who flourished around the turn of the twelfth century, likewise tried to discourage familiar interaction between Muslims and *dhimmis*, especially Christians. He prohibited Muslims from giving messages to Christians or Jews in the public baths, from throwing out their refuse, and from cleaning their lavatories. Nor should Muslims work with the animals of *dhimmis* or ride horseback in their company. Muslim women are told to avoid entering the churches of the Christians, "for the priests are fornicators, adulterers, and pederasts." Even Frankish (non-Muslim) women are prohibited from doing so since there is not, according to the author, a single priest "who does not keep two or more of these women, spending the night with them." Muslims are commanded not to sell scientific books to Jews or Christians, "for they translate the books of science, and attribute them to their own people and to their bishops, when they are

admiration of many Muslims, as indicated by the respect accorded certain Jews in official circles.¹⁴ The cultural challenge posed by *dhimmis*

[really] the works of Muslims." It is also recommended that Muslims not receive treatment from Jewish or Christian physicians, "for they have no concern for the welfare of a Muslim.... How could one trust his lifeblood with someone who has no concern for what is best for a Muslim?" (trans. Melville/Ubaydli 1992, 111–113).

The very fact that *muḥtasib*s had to issue these directives suggests the possibility that Muslims did buy meat and wine from Christians and Jews, that they did eat food prepared by Christians for funerals and other occasions, that they did travel on the same vessels with *dhimmis*, that they did give them messages, that they did dispose of their refuse and clean their lavatories, that they did work with their animals, that their women did enter the churches of the Christians, that they did sell books to Jews and Christians, and that they sought treatment from *dhimmi* doctors.

It is likely that such familiar interaction was more the rule than the exception from the earliest days of Muslim domination in Spain until the time when Muslim rule began to unravel and religious intolerance grew. This change in the relationship between Andalusian Muslims and Christians was already in evidence during the lifetime of Ibn Ḥazm, and its repercussions were undoubtedly experienced by him.

¹⁴The florescence of Jewish culture in Islamic Spain is best indicated by the rise of various Jewish individuals to political prominence despite the prohibition of this in the regulations of the *dhimma*. During the reign of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III al-Nāṣir (reigned 912–961) and his successor al-Ḥakam (reigned 961–976), for instance, the physician Ḥasdaī ibn Shaprūt (d. 970) attained high rank in the caliphal court and was extolled in both Muslim and Jewish sources. This son of a wealthy family of Córdoba was employed at first as 'Abd al-Raḥmān III's personal physician but gradually came to be entrusted with financial and diplomatic responsibilities (most notably with the Byzantine and Germans) as well (Ashtor 1973–84, 1:155–227).

Ibn Ḥazm (d. ca. 994), in the preface to his commentary on Dioscorides (*Tafsīr min kitāb Diyāsquridis*), describes the respect in which Ḥasdaī was held by his contemporaries (trans. de Goyangos 1964 [1840], 1:xxv). In the *Tabaqāt al-umam* (*Categories of Nations*), Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. 1070) also mentions Ḥasdaī several times in his chapter on the scholars of Israel, describing him in warm terms (trans. Salem/Kumar 1991, 80–81). The Jewish author Ibn Dāūd (d. ca. 1180), in his *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, also mentions Ḥasdaī several times, indicating his prominence in the Jewish community (trans. G. Cohen 1967, 57, 67, 70, 93, 102).

The prominence achieved by Ḥasdaī ibn Shaprūt in the tenth century was matched, or even exceeded, by one of Ibn Ḥazm's Jewish contemporaries, Samuel ibn Nagrela (d. 1056). Ibn Dāūd extols him in the *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, presenting him as an ideal model to be emulated by Andalusian Jews. "Besides being a great scholar and a highly cultured person," he notes, Ibn Nagrela, was thoroughly conversant in Arabic and "was, indeed, competent to serve in the king's palace" (trans. G. Cohen 1967, 71–72).

With the fall of Córdoba to the Berbers in 1013 and the onset of the social instability that characterized the period of the party-kings, Ibn Nagrela, like Ibn Ḥazm, was displaced. According to the account given by Ibn Dāūd (which, in all likelihood, contains legendary elements), Ibn Nagrela fled to Málaga, where he was a spice merchant. There he met Ibn al-Arif, the scribe (*katīb*) of Ḥabbūs, the Zīrid ruler of Granada. It seems that the *katīb* had received letters from a certain maldeservant of his who had enlisted the services of Ibn Nagrela in composing them. "Astounded at the learning they reflected," Ibn al-Arif made inquiry as to who had written them. When learning that it was Ibn Nagrela, around the year 1020 he convinced the Jewish merchant to relinquish his trade and to become his aide. It was thus that Ibn Nagrela "became a scribe and counsellor of the counsellor to the King. Now the counsel that he gave was as if one consulted the oracle of God, and thanks to his counsel, King Ḥabbūs achieved success and became exceedingly great." When Ibn al-Arif died, it was Ibn Nagrela who replaced him (trans. G. Cohen 1967, 72–73). He was, moreover, recognized as the leader (*naṣīb*) of the

was unique to the Muslim experience in Islamic Spain; in the Eastern Muslim territories, *dhimmi* culture presented no compelling attraction to the Muslim majority. Thus, Ibn Hazm's characterization of Jews and Christians in the *Treatise* may be a response to distinctively Andalusian conditions.

Jewish community of al-Andalus in 1027.

From 1038 Ibn Nagrela served as leader of the Granadan army against that of the Abbadids of Seville, winning a stunning victory against the latter in 1039. In the 1050's he launched military campaigns throughout al-Andalus for his Berber patrons, building a legendary reputation for himself and inspiring much pride among the Jews. In addition to all this, he produced a corpus of legal and poetical works and was a patron of Jewish learning.

Ibn Nagrela's political, military, religious, and literary successes were a source of embitterment to the disillusioned Ibn Hazm during his reclusive years in Mont Lisham. He resented that a non-Muslim could attain such status and exert such influence in Muslim territory. According to Ibn Hazm, Ibn Nagrela wrote an attack on the Qur'an, but Ibn Hazm's claim is suspect. For Ibn Nagrela to write such an attack would have meant political, and quite possibly physical, suicide (cf. Wasserstein 1985, 201-205). Ibn Hazm's claim is all the more dubious considering that we do not even have a reference to a manuscript of this work, only supposed arguments from it cited in the course of Ibn Hazm's *Radd (Refutation)*. Even Ibn Hazm himself never claims to have seen a copy of the text; he claims only to have read portions of it in the work of another Muslim author of his day (Perlmann 1948-49, 280; Garcia Gomez 1936, 2). Nevertheless, the fact that Ibn Hazm could even suggest that Ibn Nagrela had composed such an attack indicates the level of power and invulnerability to which the Jewish vizier had risen.

CHAPTER VI

The Polemical Process of the *Treatise*

Thus far we have situated the *Treatise* in its historical and literary contexts (in Chapters I and II) and provided a detailed synopsis of its contents (in Chapters III, IV and V). In this chapter and the next, we shall draw together this extensive contextual and descriptive data in an analysis of the polemical process and purpose of the *Treatise*.

First we shall consider why the *Treatise* assumed the shape that it did. In other words, we shall examine those factors that influenced the manner in which Ibn Hazm engaged in the polemical process in this text. Our discussion will center on the following four questions: (A) What audience or audiences was Ibn Hazm addressing? (B) What adversaries was he opposing? (C) What was the "common ground" that made this polemic understandable to its audience(s)? (D) What constraints were operative within the text, determining its form and content?

A. The Question of Audience(s)

Although the bulk of the *Treatise's* polemic disparages Jews and Christians by attacking their scriptures, the text itself strongly suggests that Ibn Hazm does not consider the People of the Book to be his primary audience.

One indication is that in the *Treatise* Ibn Hazm repeatedly refers to Jews and Christians in the third person; he does not address them

directly, with but one exception. In his attack on Christians, Ibn Hazm at one point declares:

You [Christians] have not been able to clarify what you believe or fulfill what your own tongues profess because every time you imagine some new stupidity to patch up your creed, you cannot avoid unstitching some other patch! [2:36].

Aside from this unique lapse into the second person, Ibn Hazm consistently speaks of the Christians in the third person plural, just as he does the Jews. To cite only a few examples: He stresses the idea that "they [the Christians] do not avoid one error except to fall into another" [2:14]. He makes mention of "their sages ('ulamā'uhum)" [2:41] and criticizes their bishops, priests, and catholicos [2:74].

To be sure, Ibn Hazm thinks that Jews and Christians should take his arguments against their sacred texts to heart (the aforementioned lapse suggests that at some level he intends to address the People of the Book, even if only secondarily), but does not consider them to be his primary audience.

Who, then, is his primary audience? Internal textual evidence indicates that it is his fellow Muslims. This is evident from the exclamations found throughout the text, which are addressed specifically to Muslims. A few examples will suffice to establish this pattern. Addressing his readers, Ibn Hazm writes, "Marvel, then, O Muslims (*ayyuhā l-muslimūn*), at such impudence....!" [1:136]. Later he exhorts, "Praise God, O community of the Muslims (*ihmadū allāh ma'āshir al-muslimin*) for setting you on the right path of the luminous religion (*milla*)...." [1:148].

Furthermore, Ibn Hazm's use of the first-person plural in other passages supports the view that he is writing to his coreligionists: "Praise God for his immense grace in granting us Islam.... Let us ask that he confirm us in the grace in which he established us and make us persevere in it" [1:224]. The repeated exclamation "May God save us from error!" provides further corroboration of this point.

But to say that Ibn Hazm's primary audience is Muslim is not specific enough. The Muslim community of al-Andalus was far from monolithic. Which Muslims is he addressing? The sophistication of the *Treatise's* argumentation would not make it suitable for popular consumption. Ibn Hazm's intended audience is not the Muslim *hoi polloi*. Rather, he was probably interested in addressing other members of the educated Muslim elite of al-Andalus. In other words, it is reasonable to conclude that the *Treatise* is addressed to an intelligentsia

with broad training in the Islamic and secular sciences.¹ With their convictions, prejudices, and insecurities in mind, Ibn Hazm composed his polemic against Jews and Christians with the intention of impelling this elite to instigate political change in Andalusian society.

B. The Question of Adversaries

We have thus far considered the question of the audiences to whom the *Treatise* is directed. But since this text is clearly a polemic, we must also ask against whom it is written. What adversaries are being opposed?

At first, it seems that the answer to this question is obvious: Ibn Hazm's adversaries are Jews and Christians. But this response is not without its difficulties. If he wanted to attack the People of the Book, why did he not simply assail them directly? He could have done so without fear of reprisal. Why are they not his primary adversaries?

It seems that Ibn Hazm's polemical purpose extends beyond disparagement of the People of the Book. His agenda is more complex.

¹Ibn Hazm's own writings give clear indications of the sort of person he considered to be among the intelligentsia. His *Marātib al-'ulūm* (*Categories of the Sciences*) [see trans. Chejne 1982; cf. Chejne 1974, 168-175] specifies the disciplines in which a person had to receive training to be considered genuinely educated: religious law (*sharī'a*), including the study of the Qur'an, *hadīth* literature, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and theology (*kalam*), language (including grammar and lexicography), history, astronomy, numbers, logic, medicine, poetics, rhetoric, and dream interpretation (which, Ibn Hazm asserts, assumes both "natural gifts" and mastery of the sciences [trans. Chejne 1982, 206]). In articulating a broad vision of education in which both the Islamic and secular sciences are included, the *Marātib al-'ulūm* agrees with a number of earlier works (in all likelihood, well known to Ibn Hazm) devoted to the classification of the sciences: e.g., the *lūghat al-'ulūm* (*Enumeration of the Sciences*) of al-Fārābī (d. ca. 950), the *Rasā'il* (*Epistles*) of the tenth-century encyclopedists known as the *Ikhwān al-safā'* (the "Brotherhood of Purity"), and the *Mafātib al-'ulūm* (*Keys of the Sciences*) of Abū 'Abdallāh Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, written at the end of the tenth century (F. Rosenthal 1975, 54-61). Moreover, in his *Tabaqat al-umam* (*Categories of the Nations*) [see trans. Salem/Kumar 1991], Ibn Hazm's contemporary, Sa'īd al-Andalusī (d. 1070) also espoused an ideal of wide-ranging education.

It is important to note, however, that as a religious scholar, Ibn Hazm considered the Islamic sciences to be supreme in that they alone "lead to salvation in the Hereafter and to attainment of success in the Eternal abode" (*Marātib*, trans. Chejne 1982, 193). He thus emphatically opposed accommodation with non-Muslim religions. In this regard, he stood apart from many philosophers, who would have looked with suspicion upon his anti-accommodationist agenda. The view of religion propounded by such philosophers as al-Fārābī (see Chapter II.F.2, above) and the Andalusian savants Ibn Bājja (d. 1139) and Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185) favored toleration of religious differences, in that the laws and rituals of all religions were seen merely as imperfect expressions of a purer (i.e., philosophical) truth (Chejne 1974, 322-327). The tendency among the philosophical elite, therefore, would have been to reject Ibn Hazm's call for intolerance as unnecessary and untenable.

Not all intellectuals, however, were of philosophical bent. Many of the educated Muslim elite of al-Andalus, therefore, were likely to be quite receptive to Ibn Hazm's polemic agenda against Jews and Christians.

He addresses his polemic to Muslims, I would suggest, because the principal target of his polemic is *intra-communal*. He addresses an elite Muslim audience to encourage them to take a stand against what he considers to be grievous errors *within* the Andalusian Islamic community. I suggest that the adversaries against whom he directs his efforts are the Muslim political leaders of al-Andalus, specifically the Berbers who had assumed control of the various party kingdoms of Ibn Ḥazm's day.² What is ostensibly an attack against Jews and Christians in the *Treatise* is actually an indirect assault on these party kings whom Ibn Ḥazm sees as his principal adversaries. The reasons for such an interpretation will be explored more fully in what follows.

To summarize: Ibn Ḥazm's primary audience in the *Treatise* is Muslim, not Jewish or Christian. He is interested primarily in motivating an educated elite to turn against his principal adversaries, viz., the Berber party kings of al-Andalus. The People of the Book are only a secondary target.

C. What is the "Common Ground"?

Polemical discourse can be meaningful only if the polemicist and his audience share sufficient "common ground"; it is only by virtue of such common ground that communication can take place (cf. Levinson 1983, 204-205). That is, polemical language can have meaning and impact only if it is uttered or written with certain shared parameters, which are a matter not of semantics but of particular context. This context may well have been established through previous communication (that is, the present polemical discourse may be part of an ongoing tradition of exchange), or it may derive from a shared cultural or ideological foundation.³

²Note that anti-Berber sentiment is inherent in Ibn Ḥazm's appeal to the aforementioned educated elite, whose learning was dependent on a sophisticated knowledge of Arabic—something which few Berbers could claim!

³The theory of "pragmatics" provides several concepts that prove useful in understanding this "common ground" necessary for effective polemic. Polemic is a "conversation" of sorts between two parties. According to pragmatic theory, conversation depends not only on the truth conditions of the expressions used but also on a range of non-truth-conditional inferences, called implicatures, assumed by the interlocutors (Levinson 1983:127). That is, what renders conversation possible is not only the semantic value of the words used but also a number of pragmatic, context-dependent maxims undergirding the exchange. Grice explains conversational implicature in terms of maxims of quality (make your contribution one that is true), quantity (make your contribution as informative as, but not more informative than, is required), relevance (be relevant), and manner (be perspicuous), all of which are based on a governing principle of cooperation (Levinson 1983, 101-102).

The *Treatise's* effectiveness in engaging both its primary and secondary audiences derives from the common ground Ibn Ḥazm astutely maintains with both his coreligionists and the People of the Book in constructing his polemic. Because of the plurality of audiences, the common ground has several elements, which we shall now examine.

1. Islamic Doctrine

Despite the fact that the vast majority of Andalusian Muslims repudiated Ibn Ḥazm's Zāhiri idiosyncracies, they shared with him the fundamental doctrines of Islam. Thus Ibn Ḥazm could appeal to such doctrines as the absolute unity and perfection of God, the divine incorporeality, the pristine truth of God's revelations to the prophets, the inimitability of the Qur'an, the moral inerrancy (*iṣma*) of the prophets, the necessity of reliable textual transmission (comparable to that established by the *isnād* of *ḥadīths*), and Islam's abrogation of Judaism and Christianity, without having to prove any of them. It is no coincidence, then, that his attack on the present Jewish and Christian scriptures is built precisely on these tenets that enjoyed virtually universal acceptance among Muslims. And as we argued in Chapter II, the doctrine of *tahriḥ*, the bedrock on which the *Treatise's* polemic is built, had become firmly established long before Ibn Ḥazm's time.

To be sure, the implicature of polemic differs significantly from that of everyday conversation: the usually high level of cooperation characteristic of the latter is mitigated in the former. Nevertheless, even when such "avowed non-cooperation is assumed" (Levinson 1983, 121-122), some sort of implicature is at work; without such "ground rules," communication would fail completely. It seems that the maxims of quantity and relevance would hold in polemical conversation but that those of quality and manner might undergo some metamorphosis as a result of the mitigation of the cooperative principle. While in normal conversation the quality maxim prohibits one from saying what is believed to be false or affirming that for which adequate evidence is lacking, in polemic one may very well not hold so rigorously to standards of veracity or evidential corroboration. Likewise, in everyday conversation the maxim of manner prompts one to avoid obscurity and ambiguity, while in polemic obscurity and ambiguity may very well be used if they assist the polemicist in his agenda. The degree to which the usual maxims of communication are flouted in polemic will depend to a great extent on the context in which a particular adversarial relationship develops. In any case, the flouting cannot be too egregious if the polemicist does not want to lose his credibility or his audience completely. In other words, the polemicist cannot violate what Bailey (1983, chap. 9) calls the "principle of abomination," which dictates that anyone overstepping certain bounds in interacting with others incurs penalties and sanctions.

Thus, to be effective, a polemicist must have a clear sense of what "common ground" he shares with his audience—and how far he can manipulate this audience on that "common ground" without losing the audience's receptivity to his polemic.

2. Islamic Law

In addition to the doctrinal principles of Islam, Ibn Hazm's primary audience also assented to the requirements of the *shari'a*, or Islamic law. In its well-defined vision of societal structure, the *shari'a* clearly stipulated the duties incumbent on, and the rights conceded to, *dhimmis* living within *dār al-Islām*. The conditions of the *dhimma*, as noted earlier (pp. 140-142), were largely ignored in the Andalusian party kingdoms of Ibn Hazm's day. He could justify his animosity toward Jews and Christians, therefore, on legal grounds to which all Muslims (especially the intelligentsia, many of whom were well versed in the requirements of the *shari'a*) could be expected to assent.

3. Common Religious Sensibilities

In indirectly addressing the People of the Book as his secondary audience, Ibn Hazm could certainly not assume the same extensive doctrinal common ground that he could in addressing Muslims. Nevertheless, he could appeal to certain sensibilities that Jews and Christians shared with Muslims, especially concerning proper respect for God and the matters of religion.

These shared religious sensibilities could perhaps best be expressed in negative form. Regardless of what positive assertions they would make concerning God and proper religious observance, Jews and Christians would certainly agree that God does not lie; that he does not contradict himself or teach inconsistencies; that he does not lack knowledge of such human disciplines as geography, history, or arithmetic; that he is not irrational or stupid; that he is not arbitrary in fixing a way of life for his people; and that he does not tolerate immorality, especially among those whom he has chosen to be his prophets. Consequently, Ibn Hazm finds fault with the Torah and Gospel by proving, through numerous examples, that they offend against these fundamental sensibilities by violating the most basic precepts of religious decency, precepts which Jews and Christians, no less than Muslims, felt obliged to defend. Ibn Hazm thus extends the common ground he shares with his audiences beyond the limits of Islam to the domains of Judaism and Christianity, encouraging receptivity to his polemical claims not just among his coreligionists but among the *dhimmis* as well.

4. Reason

But the most universal basis on which Ibn Hazm develops a common ground with his audience is his appeal to reason, an appeal derived largely from his familiarity with Greek philosophical method (see Treatise C.1, below). He holds all human beings, whether Muslim, Jewish, or Christian, accountable to rational norms.

At the very beginning of the *Treatise* he levels his fundamental charge against non-Muslims: they have neglected to follow the dictates of reason. Instead, they capitulate to passions and whim; they blindly submit to the authority of their forebears; they value group loyalty or concern for worldly advancement over truth [1:116]. Christians, he claims, lack intelligence and therefore have been unable to see the falsehoods that any rational person could readily detect in their religion. He charges that their scriptures contain things that could be uttered "only by those worthy to be shut up in an insane asylum" or by imbeciles [2:17], i.e., by those who have lost the faculty of reason. At the close of the *Treatise*, he advises Christians to cease their submission to human authority and instead apply reason, since it is reason that God has put in the human soul to be used as the criterion between truth and falsehood. It is reason, he asserts, which differentiates human beings from mere beasts [2:74].⁴

By such statements, Ibn Hazm motivates his audiences—Muslim and *dhimmi* alike—to apply the laws of reason to all of the questions he raises against the sacred texts of the Jews and Christians.⁵

D. Operative Constraints

On the basis of the common ground discussed in the preceding section, Ibn Hazm could have developed his polemic in any number of

⁴It is interesting to note that in the closing sentences of the *Treatise*, in which he prescribes the cure for Christian error, Ibn Hazm lists reason as the first—and hence most basic—guarantor of truth. After reason, one is to appeal to the texts revealed by the "founder of Islam," viz., Muhammad; but even the truth of these texts, he points out, is "proved to us by sure reasons." Finally, Ibn Hazm lists a third authoritative source to be consulted: the unanimous consensus of the companions of Muhammad [2:74-75]. Note that by limiting legitimate consensus (*ijma'*) to the companions of the Prophet (and thereby refusing to extend its proper exercise to the contemporary 'ulama'), Ibn Hazm articulates one of the *Zahiri* doctrines.

⁵Ibn Hazm's appeal to his readers to reason together with him, while he skillfully manipulates this reasoning process to win them over to his views, is precisely what Bailey (1983, chap. 6) refers to as "rhetoric of compromise." Though supposedly driven only by the canons of reason, this form of rhetoric, Bailey argues, is fueled by the passion of the rhetor no less than "rhetoric of assertion" (cf. note 12, below).

ways. Why then did he give it the form and the content that he did? What factors constrained the way in which he engaged in the polemical process?

I would argue that the constraints operative in the polemical of the *Treatise* are provided by three major criteria to which Ibn Hazm held himself accountable: (1) the techniques of the classical rhetorical tradition, (2) the standards of personal worthiness discussed in his *adab* works, and (3) the political conditions required for his personal welfare. The first two of these criteria will be discussed in the sections that follow; the third will be examined in Chapter VII.

1. Classical Rhetorical Techniques

One constraint which helped to shaped the *Treatise* is Ibn Hazm's adherence to standards of rhetoric as stipulated by the "ancients," i.e., the classical Greeks. His literary techniques are best interpreted against the background of the theory articulated in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*.⁶ That Ibn Hazm was well versed in the philosophy of the classical Greek thinkers is clear. His *Taqrib li-hadd al-mantiq wa-l-madkhal ilayhi* (*Simplification of Logic and Introduction to It*), for example, is based on Aristotle's works on logic (Chejne 1974, 318). When his opponents accused him of being infatuated with the books of the Greeks and the "heresies" contained in them, Ibn Hazm vehemently defended his dependence on them in a reply to an anonymous letter:

Tell us something about logic, and the books of Euclid and Ptolemy. Have you or have you not read them, O babble-mouth? If you read them, why should you deny the same to others? Or have you denied them to yourself? Come, tell us about the heresy you found in them—if you are at all familiar with the subject matter therein. But if you have never read them, how can you deny what you do not know? If you have any brain, fear, or shame, you would not talk about books concerning which you know nothing (trans. Chejne 1982, 52).

Likewise, in the *Taqrib* he defends his reliance on Aristotle and the other Greek thinkers in matters of logic. He compares their books to a strong medicine which, when used by a person of sound health, does much good but when used by a person of feeble constitution, can do harm;

⁶It is not surprising that Ibn Hazm had access to the works of Aristotle. In the two hundred years between the first half of the ninth century and the first half of the eleventh century C.E., all the principal works of Aristotle had been translated, either directly from Greek or through Syriac intermediaries (Holt et al. 1970, 2:781-782), many at the "House of Wisdom" (*Bayt al-Hikma*), established by al-Ma'mun (d. 833) in Baghdad. It is likely, however, that the *Rhetoric* had been translated even before the foundation of the *Bayt al-Hikma* (Walzer 1960, 631). We have already noted (see Chapter III.B.5) that Ibn Hazm cites Aristotle's *Book of Animals*, as well as Ptolemy's *Geography*, in discussing the location of Ya'juj and Ma'juj.

that is, their thought is of great use to someone whose faith is strong but a threat to someone whose faith is weak (Chejne 1974, 318-319). In his *Maratib al-'ulum* (*Categories of the Sciences*) he stipulates that a person should study the "definitions of logic," cultivating "the knowledge of genera, species, simple nouns, logical propositions, premises, syllogism, and conclusions." In so doing, he will be able to distinguish convincing arguments from faulty ones, thus being able to "arrive at the realities of things and distinguish them without a shred of doubt from falsehood" (trans. Chejne 1982, 198).

In reading the "ancients," Ibn Hazm was most concerned with developing a theory of logic on which to base his Zāhiri method of interpretation. He had become disenchanted with both the Mālikī and Shāfi'i schools of law because he thought they were far too accepting of traditional doctrines (as expressed in the mere imitation [*taqlid*] of legal precedents, for example) which could not be justified on the basis of rigorous rational critique. Religious scholars, he argued, must avail themselves of the tools of philosophical dialectic. It is not enough simply to cite the Qur'an or the *hadiths*; such argumentation must conform to the standards of logic. Philosophy and revelation are thus seen as complementary and reciprocally supportive. Faith and intellect do not stand in mutual opposition (Chejne 1982, 75-76, 80).

If Ibn Hazm drew much of his theory of logic from Greek philosophers, he also derived much of his systematic analysis of rhetoric from them, especially Aristotle. An entire section of his *Taqrib* is devoted to the topic. In it he mentions the writings of Aristotle, as well as those of Muslim rhetoricians Ja'far ibn Qudamah (d. ca. 940) and his own friend Ibn Shuhayd (d. 1035). He asserts that rhetoric is aimed at clarity of expression so that a discourse can be understood by the common people as well as by the intellectual elite (Chejne 1982, 139). In the *Maratib* he argues that it "is a praiseworthy science if its pursuer directs it to invoking God..., to elucidating the knowledge of realities, and to teaching the ignorant" (trans. Chejne 1982, 206).

The form of rhetoric of greatest interest to him was *disputatio*. He devotes a lengthy treatment to its etiquette in the *Taqrib* (Chejne 1982, 48-51), where much of his advice to disputants seems to be inspired by Aristotle's theory of debate as developed in the *Topics*.

It should come as no surprise, then, that the rhetorical techniques Ibn Hazm employs in the *Treatise* reflect Aristotelian categories. In what follows we shall examine the arrangement of his discourse (*taxis*, in Aristotelian terms) as well as the aspects of his argumentation

(involving the Aristotelian concepts of enthymeme, example [*pistis*], *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*).

a. The Arrangement of the *Treatise*

The structure of both parts of the *Treatise* conforms to Aristotelian models. In his *Rhetoric*, iii.13, Aristotle specifies that every speech consists of two necessary parts, the statement of the case to be argued and the argument itself, which are preceded by an introduction and followed by an epilogue. This four-part schema is clearly evident in the outline of the first part of the *Treatise* (see pp. 58-59, above), in which the introduction and statement are found under I; the argument, under II-XII; and the conclusion, under XIII. In the outline of the second part (see pp. 99-101, above) the introduction is found under I; the statement, under III; the argument, under II and IV-X; and the conclusion under XI.

Since argumentation clearly comprises most of the *Treatise*, let us examine its characteristics in greater detail.

b. The Argumentation in the *Treatise*: *Logos*

As in the analysis of the *Treatise's* structure, so in the analysis of its argumentation Aristotelian categories prove useful. Aristotle's theory of argumentation, as developed in the *Rhetoric*, centers on three modes of persuasion: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. Ibn Hazm uses each of them in the *Treatise*. We shall discuss *logos* here, and consider *pathos* and *ethos* below.

Logos, the ability to reason logically, is the most important of the modes of persuasion; it brings about its result when "we establish the true or apparently true from the means of persuasion applicable to each individual subject" (*Rhetoric*, i.2; trans. Freese 1967, 17). Thus *logos* is rooted in reason; its force consists in rational discourse.

In keeping with this emphasis on rationality, Ibn Hazm explicitly refers to reason as an indispensable criterion of truth and as the dividing line between the truth of Islam and the falsehood of Judaism and Christianity. At the very beginning of the *Treatise*, for instance, he charges that non-Muslims have neglected to follow the dictates of reason, remaining instead under the sway of passion, caprice, blind submission to authority, and other such irrational impulses [1:116]. Islam, on the other hand, is "the splendid religion whose truth is verified by reason and the Book which God himself revealed" [1:224]. Elsewhere he asserts that the truth of Islamic doctrine is established not only by authentic tradition but by natural reason as well [2:10]. The

inauthenticity of the books of the New Testament should be obvious to "anyone who has the use of reason" [2:27]. Rather than submitting to human authority, Christians are advised to apply reason, which God has placed in human souls to serve as "the criterion to distinguish truth from error"; it is this reason which differentiates human beings from beasts [2:74].

But on what basis does Ibn Hazm develop this appeal to reason? Again, he draws on Aristotelian theory, according to which "persuasive arguments" take the form of either deductive or inductive proofs. The usual form of deductive proof in demonstration and dialectic is the syllogism; in rhetoric, however, it usually takes the form not of explicitly stated premises and necessary conclusion but of an enthymeme, an inferred proposition yielding only a probable conclusion (*Rhetoric*, i.2; trans. Freese 1967, 25; cf. Cope 1867, 102). Inductive proof in rhetoric takes the form of an example which supports the proposition propounded in an enthymeme. As many examples as are known to the rhetor are marshalled to support this proposition, all these being "contained under the same universal proposition" being argued (*Rhetoric*, i.2; trans. Freese 1967, 29).

How does Ibn Hazm use both enthymeme and example?

(1) Enthymeme

The thesis to be argued in the *Treatise* is articulated in the tractate's heading: that the Torah and the Gospel, being replete with contradictions and falsehoods, are corrupt and different from what was originally revealed to Jews and Christians. If this enthymeme were to be expressed in syllogistic form, the premises and conclusion would be as follows:

Major Premise: Authentic scriptures (i.e., scriptures revealed by God) have no contradictions or falsehoods.

Minor Premise: The Jewish and Christian scriptures (i.e., the Torah and Gospel) contain contradictions and falsehoods.

Conclusion: Therefore, the Jewish and Christian scriptures are not authentic; they have been altered from their original state.

A related enthymeme recurs throughout the *Treatise*: that Judaism and Christianity, based as they are on inauthentic scriptures, are false

religions. Underlying this enthymeme is the following syllogism, which is not explicitly stated in the tractate:

- Major Premise:* To be true, a religion must be based on authentic scripture.
Minor Premise: Judaism and Christianity are not based on authentic scriptures.
Conclusion: Therefore, Judaism and Christianity are false religions.

The bulk of the *Treatise* is devoted to presenting proofs of the former enthymeme; that is, Ibn Ḥazm concentrates on showing that the sacred texts of Jews and Christians possess numerous contradictions and falsehoods. This he does by presenting scores of examples of the distortions and alterations which the earlier scriptures have supposedly undergone.

(2) Example

The reader of the *Treatise* can discern a certain rhythm in Ibn Ḥazm's argumentation. Within the overall structure of the text, he presented a series of examples, the elements of which are as follows:

- 1 — introduction of a specific pericope or topic
- 2 — critique of its error
- 3 — exclamatory comment

In some cases, a fourth element is added:

- 4 — comparison with "Islamic truth"

That is, Ibn Ḥazm engages his reader by (1) presenting a controversial pericope from the earlier scriptures, (2) decrying its heterodox content (or interpretation), (3) expressing in exclamatory form his disdain for the error of the Jews or Christians and, by way of contrast, his gratitude for the truth of Islam, and (4) comparing the erroneous stance on the issue at hand with the Qur'ānic teaching. This rhythm effectively propels the reader from one example to the next, giving him or her a sense of the building of a cumulative argument supporting the central thesis of the work.

(a) Examples from Jewish Sources

A few of these examples from the first part of the *Treatise* will serve to illustrate this rhythm of argumentation.

Ibn Ḥazm criticizes the story of the golden calf in the Torah (Ex. 32), according to which Aaron, a prophet and messenger of God, led the people in idol-worship [1:162-163; see pp. 62-63, above]. After (1) summarizing the content of the text, he (2) decries its slandering of Aaron. At the culmination of his critique, he (3) exclaims, "We give thanks to God that he has saved us from such error!" He then (4) considers the Qur'ānic passages depicting the same episode, in which, by contrast, Aaron was forced by the unfaithful "Sāmiri" to engage in impiety; he himself had no inclination to do so.

Similarly, in reacting against what he considers to be the wildly inflated census figures in the book of Numbers, he lists six lies inherent in the text [1:177-179]. In his discussion of the fourth lie (regarding the progeny of Levi; see p. 80, above), he (1) recounts in detail the figures given for the Levites and, after (2) arguing that they are absurd, (3) exclaims, "We thank God for his favor and ask him to preserve us from such trials! Amen! Amen!" [1:178]. Likewise, in his analysis of the sixth lie (regarding the total given for the entire Levite population), he (1) adduces the textual material, (2) assails the author's arithmetical error, and then (3) exclaims:

By God! we never heard talk of anyone who was made of such abject clay or afflicted with such corrupt temperament than he who wrote this lie for them (the Jews), let alone those who have followed and given credence to his lie! [1:179].

Notice that because the Qur'ān does not include census figures corresponding to those given in Numbers, no "Qur'ānic truth" is given in contradistinction to the "Jewish lies." The force of Ibn Ḥazm's argument here, however, derives from practical reason and arithmetical computation. Because he is thoroughly convinced that Islam is in every way consistent with reason and inclusive of all human truth (arithmetical and otherwise), he is, in a sense, still contrasting the truth of Islam to the error of Judaism.

Another example of Ibn Ḥazm's rhythm of argumentation is found in his expression of horror evoked by the Torah's account of how Moses dared to question God's ability to give all the Israelites meat to eat (Num. 11:21) [1:181-182; see p. 63, above]. After (1) describing the depiction of Moses in this passage, he (2) objects that a prophet would never behave in such a way. He then (3) exclaims, "My God, we give you thanks for having freed us from the error with which you tested the

Jews!" [1:182]. He concludes by (4) contrasting this pericope in the Torah with passages in the Qur'an recounting how Zechariah and Mary questioned God—not objecting to his announcement or questioning his power, but simply asking for explanatory information.

Furthermore, he assails Dt. 13:1-3, according to which Moses asserted that a false prophet could arise among the people, one who would be able to perform signs and wonders among them [1:184-185; see p. 63, above]. After (1) presenting this controversial passage, he (2) impugns the reasoning behind it (how can a true prophet be definitively recognized if false prophets as well as true can perform miracles?), and (3) exclaims, "May God deliver us from this, and may we find refuge in him against error!" [1:185]. Implicit in this critique is his (4) defense of the Islamic doctrine of prophetic inerrancy (*iṣma*) against Jewish error.

Perhaps most indicative of the rationale (and passion) undergirding the exclamations which punctuate the *Treatise* is the exclamation found at the conclusion of the section dealing with the Jewish scriptures:

Praise God for his immense grace in granting us Islam, the splendid religion whose truth is verified by reason and the Book which God himself revealed, full of clear light and evident realities. Let us ask that he confirm us in the grace in which he has established us and make us persevere in it until we go to him, preserving our faith and not falling into error or the wrath of God [1:224].⁷

Thus, the four aforementioned elements (introduction of topic, critique, exclamation, and comparison) provide the rhythm which carries the reader through the *Treatise*. To be sure, these elements do not recur with mechanical regularity. As already noted, the comparison with Islamic doctrine is sometimes not explicit, though it is always present implicitly. Moreover, an exclamation does not conclude each item of argumentation; sometimes it will occur after a succession of related points. Nevertheless, these elements clearly provide structure to Ibn Ḥazm's argumentation and assure both its forward movement and its cumulative effect.

⁷This exclamation is reminiscent of those made at the end of summations appearing earlier in the text, in which Ibn Ḥazm gives "many thanks for the gift of Islam" [1:128] and exhorts Muslims to "praise God for having guided you to the right path which conduces to clear and splendid religion, free of all adulteration and change" [1:148].

(b) Examples from Christian Sources

The same rhythm of argumentation, with the same elements, is found in the second part of the *Treatise* as well, in which Ibn Ḥazm assails Christian texts. That is, once (1) a suitable pericope is introduced, (2) Ibn Ḥazm notes how it presents some kind of contradiction. The contradiction may be textual; that is, the pericope may be inconsistent with the content of the Old Testament (a problem, since Christians accept the Jewish Scriptures as revealed), with the content of the same New Testament book from which the pericope is taken, or with the content of some other New Testament book. The contradiction may be rational or factual; that is, the pericope may violate the canons of reason or disregard a known fact. Finally, the contradiction may be moral; that is, the pericope may violate some canon of propriety accepted by Ibn Ḥazm and his audiences.

After presenting a pericope and exposing its contradictions, Ibn Ḥazm often (3) concludes his argument with an exclamation decrying the error he has just pointed out, sometimes (4) contrasting it to the pristine truth of Islam (although Ibn Ḥazm draws comparisons with the Qur'an much less frequently in his critique of the Gospel than he did in his critique of the Torah). Such exclamations punctuate the argumentation of this part of the *Treatise*; sometimes they occur after the discussion of one pericope, sometimes after the discussion of several. They enable Ibn Ḥazm at crucial points in his argument to re-affirm his basic thesis of *tahrif* before moving on to yet another proof of it. Especially indicative of Ibn Ḥazm's purpose in using such exclamations is one occurring early in this part of the *Treatise*. In it he condemns the folly of those who, unlike the Muslims who stand on the firm basis of the Qur'an, base their doctrine on unreliable, corrupted scriptures:

Marvel, then, at this stupidity and error! Marvel at the frivolity of those who accept this to the point of having it as an article of faith!... Marvel, then, at those who give worship to God with such stupidities—and give thanks to God for your salvation! [2:13-14].

Let us examine a few examples of the rhythm of the *Treatise's* argumentation against Christian belief and practice.

Ibn Ḥazm (1) points to the depiction of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mt. 4:1-11; Lk. 4:1-12), as (2) expressing the enormity that Christ was conducted about by Satan, either of his own volition or against his will "like an epileptic" [2:17; see p. 113, above]. Such an occurrence, he asserts, could never happen to a genuine prophet, let

alone someone whom the Christians consider to be God and the Son of God. He then (3) exclaims:

Never have I seen a greater stupidity than this extravagant delirium! Let us praise God for the great favor he has done for us! [2:17].

Ibn Hazm also (1) assails the account of Jesus' visit to his home country (Mt. 13:53-58 and parallels) on several counts [2:34-36; see p. 109, above]. (2) How can the text claim that Jesus was the "carpenter's son" and the brother of James, Josés, Simon, and Judas and that he could not do mighty works there? The errors inherent in such statements are obvious. First, Christians claim that Jesus is God and yet hold that he had parents as well as siblings. Second, while saying that he is God, they assert that he was unable to perform miracles. Third, the text depicts Jesus as hearing the crowds attributing his paternity to Joseph without correcting them, thus consenting to falsehood. In the course of this analysis, Ibn Hazm (3) exclaims:

By God, I swear that if we with our own eyes had not seen the Christians, we would not believe that anyone could give credence to such a stupidity! But blessed be He who by this means teaches us that man is not served by his eyes or ears or reason if the Creator does not guide him by the right path from ... error! We ask God indeed that he straighten our steps toward the religion of Islam, clear and splendid, that he not divert us in any way from the right path until thus we attain to meeting and knowing Him, following the doctrine of the true religion, the true sect, the true school of theology, and avoiding the errors of infidelity, heresy, and deviant schools of theology! [2:35].

Furthermore, with regard to the second objection to this passage, he (4) cites the Qur'an's teaching that "miracles come from God" (6:109) as proof of the inconsistency of the Christian claim that, though he was divine, Jesus could not perform miracles.

The issue of Joseph's paternity is again the focus of Ibn Hazm's analysis when he turns to the story of Mary and Joseph finding Jesus in the Temple (Lk. 2:25-59; see p. 106 above). After (1) recounting the episode, he (2) underscores the fact that Mary and Joseph are described as Christ's parents; Joseph is specifically called his father. How, Ibn Hazm wants to know, could Luke ascribe the paternity of Christ to Joseph? Does this not contradict the correct teaching that Christ was not engendered by any human male? In contrast to the confusing statements regarding Jesus' paternity in the New Testament, the account

of Christ's conception in the Qur'an (19:17-32) is quite clear; Ibn Hazm cites it *in extenso*. Moreover, the assertion made in the gospels that Jesus had brothers and sisters, Ibn Hazm charges, further compromises the truth of Christ's virgin birth. He concludes this section of his critique by (3) exclaiming, "God save us from error!" [2:59].

Likewise, in arguing against the practices of his Christian contemporaries, Ibn Hazm (1) notes that Christians, in submitting to their misguided leaders, have deviated from apostolic discipline [2:72; see pp. 135-136, above]. For one hundred years following Christ, he asserts, Christians observed a forty-day fast in January before celebrating the Passover with the Jews.⁸ Only later did their patriarchs change this practice in favor of the present one. He (2) criticizes this development as indicative of a Christian willingness to consider the practices of Christ and his apostles erroneous while embracing as normative those religious laws coming not from God or any prophet but from mere bishops and kings! He again concludes with the exclamation "God save us from error!" [2:72].⁹

(3) A Fortiori and Concessive Argumentation

Ibn Hazm's technique of "proof by example" is strengthened from time to time by his use of classical rhetorical devices, most notably a *fortiori* argumentation (in which a conclusion is established as compelling by first establishing one that is less so)¹⁰ and *concessio* (in which a point is conceded to an opponent as part of the process of refuting the opponent's position).¹¹ Both of these devices are forms of "even if" argumentation; that is, a position is shown to be untenable even under the most favorable circumstances, let alone less favorable ones.

In discussing examples of arithmetical errors and historical impossibilities found in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, Ibn Hazm

⁸See Chapter V, note 3, p. 136, above.

⁹Other examples of such exclamations may be found in vol. 2, pp. 12, 18, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 36, 54, 61, and 69 of the Cairo edition.

¹⁰This form of argumentation is described by Aristotle in the *Rhetoric*, ii.23, where he describes the "topics" of demonstrative and refutative enthymemes: "Another topic is derived from the more and less. For instance, if not even the gods know everything, hardly can men; for this amounts to saying that if a predicate, which is more probably affirmable of one thing, does not belong to it, it is clear that it does not belong to another of which it is less probably affirmable" (trans. Freese 1967, 301).

¹¹*Concessio* is defined by Quintilian, a rhetorician of the first-century C.E., as pretending "to admit something actually unfavorable to ourselves by way of showing our confidence in our cause" (*Institutio Oratoria* 9.2.51; trans. Butler 1922, 3:405).

appeals to a *fortiori* reasoning several times. That is, he assumes hypothetical (and highly unlikely) conditions under which the possibility of a claim made in a particular scriptural text would be greatly enhanced. He then demonstrates, however, that even under these conditions, the claim is thoroughly impossible. How much more impossible, then, would it be under actual conditions! He uses such an approach, for instance, in refuting the passage in Exodus about the length of Israel's stay in Egypt [1:125-127, 158-159; see p. 69, above] and the passage in the gospel of Matthew about the number of generations in Christ's genealogy [2:13; see p. 120, above].

Furthermore, through use of *concessio* he strengthens his argument that the story of Abraham's three heavenly visitors (Gen. 18:1-8) is corrupt. He shows that even if one concedes that the visitors were angels and not God (as the Jews maintain, according to Ibn Hazm), the text's contradictions cannot be resolved [1:130-131; see p. 84, above]. He also argues that the account of Jacob's wrestling at the Jabbok (Gen. 32:22-29) is untenable even if one accepts the Jewish contention that Jacob wrestled with an angel and not God [1:142; see pp. 84-85, above]. Similarly, he disputes the authenticity of the promise supposedly made by Jesus that those who had left house, brothers, sisters, father, mother, wife, children, or lands for his sake and for that of the gospel would in this world receive a hundredfold of the same (Mk. 10:29-30). While he concedes for the sake of argument that, in a sense, Christians gain hundreds of brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and children among their coreligionists, in no way can they be said to gain houses and lands a hundredfold [2:55; see pp. 123-124, above]. Not even concession can render this verse completely tenable.

The use of *concessio* is also evident in Ibn Hazm's comparison of the purity of certain verses of the Qur'an with the corruption of comparable biblical passages. Ibn Hazm concedes that indeed, like the Torah in its depiction of Moses, the Qur'an depicts certain individuals (i.e., Zechariah and Mary) as questioning God [1:181; see p. 63, above]. He then uses this concession as an opportunity to cite the Qur'anic passages and to show how they differ from their biblical counterparts [1:182]. Similarly, he concedes to the People of the Book that the Qur'an does seem in some verses to affirm the authenticity of their scriptures. He cites these passages *in extenso* as part of this concession. Then, however, he explains how each is to be properly interpreted, i.e., interpreted in such a way that they do not support Jewish and Christian claims [1:211-215; see pp. 98-99, above]. Also, we noted in Chapter III (p. 60, above) that in his discussion of the biblical claim that Abraham

had married his sister (Gen. 20:12) [1:135], Ibn Hazm concedes that such a marriage, while illicit in later times, was indeed licit for Abraham. He makes this concession, however, not to vindicate the Jewish interpretation of this pericope but to defend the Islamic doctrine of abrogation, which the Jews, much to his chagrin, refuse to accept.

c. *Pathos* and *Ēthos*

In addition to *logos*, Aristotle saw the successful rhetor as using two other modes of persuasion to establish a point, *pathos* and *ēthos*. The former builds on an appeal to the emotions; the latter, to the moral sense. That is, through use of *pathos*, the rhetor attempts to stir the emotions so as to put the audience into a frame of mind he deems desirable. After all, Aristotle observes, "the judgments we deliver are not the same when we are influenced by joy or sorrow, love or hate" (*Rhetoric*, i.2; trans. Freese 1967, 17). Through words and delivery, therefore, rhetors are well advised to manipulate feelings to the advantage of their argument. Moreover, they should do everything possible to build the audience's confidence in them as trustworthy, upstanding, and knowledgeable; this entails the use of *ēthos*. "We feel confidence in a greater degree and more readily in persons of worth in regard to everything in general," Aristotle notes, "but where there is no certainty and there is room for doubt, our confidence is absolute" (*Rhetoric*, i.2; trans. Freese 1967, 17).

Ibn Hazm employs both of these persuasive devices in the *Treatise*. It is clear that in the exclamations we have already described, the purpose is to stir the emotions of his audience, to make them indignant at the errors he is decrying and disdainful of the people who hold and propagate them.¹²

¹²Because Ibn Hazm appeals to emotion in his polemic, the *Treatise* does not only present rational ideas; it also encodes passion. Why is this two-pronged approach necessary? Bailey (1983, 21) maintains that because our vision of reality is so incomplete, reason alone cannot sustain it. Rational analysis simply discloses its inadequacy. We therefore rely on the passions to comfort us and to induce trust. He argues, in fact, that these two contraries (reason and passion) are not even equally balanced; as he puts it, "the passions rule." As long as we have purposes and goals (and polemic is certainly purposive), the passions will remain dominant because the goal must always be cathected. But we fail to recognize the primacy of passion, however, professing distrust of it and continuing artificially to emphasize reason (24).

In Bailey's view, polemic intertwines two forms of rhetoric, both propelled by passion. The first of these he calls the "rhetoric of assertion" (chap. 6). It arises out of total disagreement on matters of belief or value, or when one simply wishes to anathematize an adversary. It establishes uncompromising commitment to a particular viewpoint; it simply asserts that stance, invoking notable authorities. It tends to be judgmental, drawing attention to the relative moral qualifications of

Furthermore, we have already seen in Chapter V how, by associating Jews, Christians, and Muslim heretics with one another, he attempts to generalize the negative emotions elicited from his readers so that all of these groups suffer the same denigration. In thus using *pathos* to damage the reputation of his adversaries, he concomitantly enhances his own; in other words, the reverse side of his rhetorical *pathos* is *ēthos*. If his opponents are not to be trusted, he can be; after all, he has identified the elements of their untrustworthiness, elements which he asserts are lacking in the pure religion of Islam and in him as an orthodox proponent of it.

The *ēthos* and *pathos* of the *Treatise* depend primarily on imagery evoked by Ibn Hazm by means of the epithets and metaphors he applies to his adversaries. This imagery complements his polemical attacks based on logic.¹³ In Chapter V,

persons relevant to the polemic. Models and vivid examples are characteristic of it (133, 138-140). On the other hand, the "rhetoric of compromise" (chap. 7) is more subtle, though no less driven by passion. It maintains a pretense of dispassion ("come, let us reason together"), while covertly maneuvering the argumentation to enable one's own passionate commitment to emerge victorious. Whether the rhetoric of assertion or the rhetoric of compromise predominates in a particular polemical discourse depends largely on the state of the relationship between polemicist and adversary.

Bailey enumerates a number of tactics for maneuvering agreement over "general principles," tactics aimed at shifting an adversary from a "sealed position." These include psychological shock (achieved through a strong frontal attack on the adversary's premises and values), effective appeal to mutually accepted authorities, direct appeal to the value of an open mind, a call to duty, or an exhortation to "make a deal" in order to look after one's own interests (147-158).

In sum, Bailey's work reminds us to view the polemical process less as an exercise in reason than as an exercise in passion. Reason's role is instrumental and subsidiary; it is used "to manipulate emotions and to capitalize on the resulting displays" (265).

Ibn Hazm's expression of passion through *pathos* and *ēthos* exemplifies "rhetoric of assertion" in that it is sharply judgmental and draws attention to the moral deficiencies of one's opponents (in contradistinction, of course, to one's own moral excellence). Moreover, the strong passion expressed in the *Treatise* constitutes a clear example of Ibn Hazm's use of "psychological shock" in an attempt to move his opponents from their "sealed position."

¹³Why would Ibn Hazm couple imagery with logic in developing his polemic? Contemporary linguistic theory can help to explain why he does so.

The work of Lakoff (1987), for example, has challenged the classical objectivist view of cognition, which maintains that reality consists of entities organized in categories defined by necessary and sufficient conditions and related to one another in ways that can be expressed in logic governed by fixed rules. In contradistinction to such an understanding, Lakoff proposes his theory of the idealized cognitive model (ICM), which he sees as a *Gestalt*, a complex structured whole grounded in preconceptual image schemas shaped by bodily interaction with the environment (1987, 271ff.). On the basis of these preconceptual schemas, every human being has the conceptualizing capacity to form metaphorical models (in which a more abstract domain is projected from a more concrete one) and metonymic models (in which a category is disclosed by one of its members), both of which further structure the ICMs (280-281). Thus complex cognitive models emerge from a

we saw that the following characterizations were used to evoke scorn for the Jews and their religion:

deceitful
impious
false
mocking
stupid
perfidious
treacherous
filthy
vile
foolish
imbecilic
lying
inane in appearance
wretched
abominable
wicked
cowardly
frivolous

combination of preconceptual "basic-level" and "image-schematic" elements (282).

All of this implies that the kind of argumentation found in polemic is not to be understood merely as the manipulation of language in accord with abstract rules of logic but a reflection of the experience of an embodied thinker interpreting reality within a particular cognitive framework, i.e., "as a being of a certain sort in an environment of a certain sort" (292). Polemic in this view is less about abstract argumentation than it is about conflicting conceptualizations of reality shaped by differing experiences of it. Polemicist and adversary see things through differing "imagic lenses."

This line of thought is affirmed, with minor variations, in the work of Johnson (1987). He too rejects the objectivist view of reality and reasoning and presents an alternative to it. Though he rejects Lakoff's distinction between basic-level schemas and image schemas, accepting only the latter, he, like Lakoff, sees reasoning as related to bodily experience in the world, not as dependent solely on abstract rules of inference. "Our acts of reasoning and deliberation," he asserts, "are not wholly independent of our bodily experience" (64); ultimately, whatever abstract structures we use relate to schematic structures grounded in embodied experience. Our beliefs are the function of our "bodily, cultural, linguistic, historical situatedness in, and toward, the world" (138).

Image schemas are thus part and parcel of rationality. Schemas do not just emerge from mental representations; they actually *organize* them "at a level more general and abstract than that at which we form particular mental images" (Johnson 1987, 24). Likewise, images used in a discourse are not to be seen as literary trills, incidental embellishments on a rational process based exclusively on propositional structures. Rather, they are constitutive of reason. They constrain rationality, establishing "a range of possible patterns of understanding and reasoning" (Johnson 1987, 137), rather like channels that limit the flow of materials through them.

Thus, to understand the dynamics of a polemical text, it is not enough to focus on its "logic." One must also pay close attention to the imagery at work in it. In fact, I suspect that the "reason of imagery" is more important than the "reason of propositions" since imagery, with its many levels of meaning and its ability to evoke affective response, has a power lacking in abstract concepts. Imagery is simply more engaging and manipulative than propositions. It more effectively induces change in perception.

of weak character
 factious
 fanatic
 blindly submissive to authority

A similar set of characterizations are applied to the Christians and Christianity, the most noteworthy of which are the following:

stupid
 irrational
 frivolous
 impious
 lying
 obstinate
 blindly submissive to authority
 arbitrary in belief and practice
 avaricious
 inferior
 theologically extremist

Furthermore, Ibn Hazm ascribes animal or vegetable attributes to Jews and Christians in an effort to demean them. For instance, he suggests that the author of the corrupted Torah was "a simpleton, imbecilic as a he-goat" (1:128) and that the words of the Torah come not from God nor a prophet but "from someone as imbecilic as an ass" (1:129). As we have already seen in Chapter VI, he likens the intelligence of the Jews to the repugnant smell of garlic (1:180). He similarly assails the intelligence of the Christians by deeming it typical of the "brains of geese" (2:36). Such metaphors sharpened the "imagic differentiation" between Muslim and non-Muslim carefully crafted by Ibn Hazm in the *Treatise*.¹⁴

¹⁴In attempting to understand the effectiveness of metaphors in the *Treatise*, one will find the work of Fernandez (1986) pertinent. He asserts that metaphors exert great power in human communication, so that the very predication of a metaphor can lead to a reorganization of our world (20). Defining metaphor as "a strategic predication upon an inchoate pronoun (an 'I,' a 'you,' a 'we,' a 'they') which makes a movement and leads to a performance" (8), he notes its instrumentality in "culture," that "quality space" consisting in any number of dimensions, or continua (13). He defines "society" as the moving about of pronouns in this space. This movement is effected by metaphor: "images of social beings are generated by metaphor predications upon pronouns" (23).

One of the most effective ways in which the polemicist can demean his adversary or that adversary's viewpoint is to situate the adversary or his viewpoint unfavorably on appropriate cultural continua.

How does metaphor accomplish this task? A major characteristic of metaphor is that it links one domain to another. This means that through it people can shift from a more complimentary to a less complimentary domain—for example, from the human domain to the animal. In this way people often manipulate one another in social life. By metaphorically predicating an associative relationship

Ibn Hazm's defamation of Jews has a different emphasis from his defamation of Christians. The former are depicted primarily as a deceitful and dirty lot jealous of their particularity and social position; the latter, primarily as a stupid and irrational mob submitting blindly to their self-serving leaders.

Despite these different emphases, however, Ibn Hazm uses an overarching imagery which lumps Jews and Christians together and sharply distinguishes them from Muslims. As we have seen, his imagery is dependent on his criteria of personal worthiness, which find expression in his works of *adab*. The People of the Book (and their religions), in that they are false, lying, stupid, and impious, are fundamentally corrupt. By way of contrast, Muslims (and Islam), in that they are true, rational, and pious, are fundamentally pure.¹⁵

2. Criteria of Personal Worthiness

In Chapter II, we presented evidence that Ibn Hazm, in composing a treatise against the authenticity of the earlier scriptures, stood in a centuries-old literary tradition having its inception in the Qur'an itself. Nevertheless, we saw that in crucial ways he deviated from this tradition. He expressed a much less charitable view of the Jewish and Christian scriptures than most other authors, deeming the Torah and Gospel utterly corrupt—as untrustworthy as the people who take them as authoritative.

By applying such categories as falsehood, lying, stupidity, and impiety to the People of the Book and their sacred texts with such vehemence and vitriol, Ibn Hazm transformed the antecedent literary tradition on *tahrif*. What accounts for the specific manner in which he effected this transformation?

The answer to this question is to be found in Ibn Hazm's *adab*, i.e., in his writings on the norms of urbanity and praiseworthy conduct.¹⁶

between an opponent and some denigrating category of experience, they effectively denigrate that opponent (chap. 3).

¹⁵This "overarching imagery" is akin to a concept developed by Fernandez (1986, 61), who observes that whole chains of metaphors can coalesce into an interlocking whole under the organizing influence of a "major metaphor." This is what Ibn Hazm does in the *Treatise*, drawing together all the aforementioned descriptions of Jews and Christians and their respective religions under the major metaphor of "corruption" and contrasting it to the major metaphor associated with Muslims and Islam, viz., "purity."

¹⁶Ibn Hazm's style of *adab* conforms to early Arabic-Islamic models, which emphasized the proper way of living, in accordance with the noble mores of one's ancestors. Later the term broadened to include the whole sum of knowledge pertaining to *humanitas* and refinement, first in a specifically Arabic cultural context

We have already noted his work on love, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (The Dove's Necklace; hereafter *Ṭawq*), which falls into this literary category. But we shall here concern ourselves primarily with his *Kitāb al-akhlāq wa-l-siyar* (Characters and Conduct; hereafter *Akhlāq*), which focuses on ethical and practical concerns. In it, often on the basis of personal experience,¹⁷ Ibn Ḥazm expresses his thoughts and feelings on those qualities of soul which make human beings noble or ignoble.

a. Falsehood and Lying

It is clear from this text that he considers falsehood and lying to be at the base of human depravity. "There is nothing worse than falsehood," he asserts. "For how do you regard a vice which has one of its varieties disbelief or impiety itself? For all disbelief is falsehood." Falsehood has its roots in wickedness, cowardice, and ignorance. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥazm, falsehood is inextricably bound up with irreligion, moral turpitude, and personal deficiencies. As one who propounds falsehood, "a liar is a vile soul which is far from achieving a greatness worthy of praise" (*Akhlāq*, trans. Abu Layla 1990, §208, p. 167). Such a reprobate cannot help being exposed. What gives him away are the contradictions into which he falls: his most implacable adversary is his own tongue, which "gets twisted and contradicts itself" (*Akhlāq*, trans. Abu Layla 1990, §312, p. 189). The liar is brought down by his own falsehood.

Abu Layla (1990, 87) observes that lying is foremost among the qualities by which Ibn Ḥazm judges human character; it is the thing he most abhors. This explains why, in seeking to discredit the sacred texts of the Jews and Christians, Ibn Ḥazm depicts them as filled with falsehoods and lies. It also explains why he characterizes Jews and Christians as deceivers and liars who inevitably fall into contradictions.

and then in more general cultural terms. Its meaning was sometimes narrowed to refer to works providing instruction regarding specialized skills necessary for functioning in particular offices (such as secretary [*kātib*] or vizier) or to "belles-lettres," elegant and refined literature. For a discussion of the varieties of *adab* that developed in the course of Islamic cultural history, see Lapidus 1984 and Gabrieli 1960, 175-176.

¹⁷In his use of autobiographical reflection, Ibn Ḥazm gives his *adab* a markedly psychological character. He not only specifies what correct behavior should be; he also analyzes the dynamics underlying it. Arnaldez (1971, 793) notes that in the *Ṭawq*, for instance, Ibn Ḥazm "gradually detaches himself from the stereotyped productions of a light literature" in that his "use of more personal examples and of direct observation lends it progressively more depth and psychological truth." The same can be said of the *Akhlāq*.

Moreover, as we have seen, Ibn Ḥazm does not see lying as problematic only in itself; it gives rise to many other depravities. It is "the fountainhead of other vices and sicknesses" (Abu Layla 1990, 87), among which are stupidity and impiety.

b. Stupidity and Impiety

For Ibn Ḥazm stupidity is not just a deficiency of intellectual capability; it is a moral fault. He defines it "as the practice of disobedience to God and the practice of vices" (*Akhlāq*, trans. Abu Layla 1990, §186, p. 164), clearly seeing it as the opposite of good sense, which he defines "as the practice of obedience to God and the practice of piety and virtues" (*Akhlāq*, trans. Abu Layla, §185, p. 164). Thus, in calling Jews and Christians stupid, Ibn Ḥazm is not impugning their intelligence so much as decrying their disobedience to God and their impiety. If they were obedient to Him, they would overcome their obstinacy, put aside their error, and submit to God by embracing Islam. Instead they persist in their stupidity, defending the falsehoods of their respective religions through impious lies. The impiety of the Jews and Christians makes them thoroughly untrustworthy. In the *Akhlāq* he advises his readers:

Put your trust in a pious man, even if the religion he practices is a different one from your own. Do not put your trust in anyone who scorns sacred things, even if he claims to belong to your own religion. As for a man who defies the commandments of the Almighty, do not trust him with anything you care greatly about (trans. Abu Layla, §79, p. 137).

I would argue that it is this kind of moral sensibility that leads Ibn Ḥazm to attack the People of the Book. He not only faults the earlier scriptures for their textual deficiencies, he also impugns them as the products of depraved authors. No less depraved, he argues, are those who accept these distorted texts. In the *Treatise*, Ibn Ḥazm thus introduces a markedly moralistic element into the *tahrif*-tradition. In so doing, he transforms it, but this transformation is not arbitrary; it is constrained by specific convictions concerning human character and conduct, convictions which find expression in his *adab*.

3. Political Conditions Required for Personal Welfare

As we indicated in Chapter I, Ibn Ḥazm repeatedly suffered the consequences of political disfavor. He was imprisoned, driven into

exile, and made to endure other indignities at the hands of secular and religious authorities whom he had alienated. Wishing to avoid similar experiences in the future, he let political factors bearing on his personal welfare constrain the manner in which he engaged in the polemical process. How he did so will be discussed in the following chapter, in which the purpose of the *Treatise* will be discussed.

E. Conclusion

We have seen that the elements of "common ground" on which Ibn Hazm builds his argumentation—Islamic doctrine, Islamic law, common religious sensibilities, and reason—support our contention that he was addressing his polemic primarily to his fellow Muslims and only secondarily to the *dhimmis*. (All four of these elements would apply to a Muslim audience; only the last two to a Jewish and Christian one.) In addressing his fellow Muslims (more specifically, an educated Muslim elite who would read a treatise like the *Treatise*) he is interested primarily in motivating them to repudiate the rule of those whom he considers to be his principal adversaries, viz., the Berber party kings of al-Andalus.

Though passionate and stinging, Ibn Hazm's polemic is not unrestrained. We have seen that a number of constraints operative within it determine its shape. Ibn Hazm's adherence to the canons of classical rhetoric determine its arrangement and argumentation. His views on personal worthiness, as expressed in his *adab* works, determine the content of his critique; his condemnation of falsehood, lying, stupidity, and impiety in particular guide his attack against the Jewish and Christian scriptures and the Jews and Christians themselves. Finally, we also noted that political considerations constrain his polemic, a topic which we shall consider in greater detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

The *Treatise* as Socio-Political Polemic

At first glance, it seems that the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* is a theological treatise aimed at converting Jews and Christians to Islam. After all, as the preceding chapters indicate, the carefully constructed and detailed arguments of the text concentrate on exposing the supposed errors of the earlier scriptures, and hence the falsehood of the religions based on them.

I shall argue otherwise in this chapter, however. While not denying the obviously theological content of the *Treatise*, I shall maintain that in composing this text, Ibn Hazm was less interested in converting Jews and Christians than in inciting Muslims to political action within the social context of eleventh-century Andalus. He was more concerned with restructuring his society than with proselytizing. We have argued that his primary audience was not the People of the Book but rather his fellow Muslims—in particular, fellow members of the Muslim intelligentsia who had an interest in the political issues of the day. I shall argue that he hoped to rally them to the cause of socio-political reform. The *Treatise* is thus not to be understood solely in light of Ibn Hazm's theological views but also in light of his writings on personal morality (*adab*) and his political thought; it is not an abstract, theological treatise so much as a practical, political one.

In exploring this thesis, we shall first examine (A) how relational restructuring is one of the principal goals of polemic in

general, and (B) how, in the *Treatise* in particular, Ibn Hazm attempts to restructure relations in his socio-political milieu.

A. Relational Restructuring as a Goal of Polemic

In the polemical process, words do not only *say* something; they also *do* something. Like all spoken or written statements, assertions made in polemic perform specific actions. They have force. They reshape the relationship between the parties involved in a polemical exchange.¹

In undertaking a polemical discourse, the author has a perception of himself and of his opponent. These initial perceptions are encoded in the polemical text. Just as one, in interpreting everyday conversation, must give attention to social deixis, that is, to how language is being used to "encode the social identities of participants..., or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and persons and entities referred to" (Levinson 1983, 89), so one must do likewise in interpreting polemic, whether oral or written.

But what are the dynamics of reshaping the initial relationship between polemicist and adversary? Brown and Levinson (1978) provide a useful model for interpreting this process. They note that "strategic message construction" is typical of verbal interaction, making it "the key locus of the interface of language and society" (56). In other words, in polemic or any other communication, one engages in a strategy designed to shape or re-shape a relationship. Rational choice determines "language norms," which are used by a speaker or author in such a way as to enhance her "face," whether negatively (by having her designs unimpeded by others) or positively (by having these designs affirmed by others) (Brown and Levinson 1978, 59, 61-62). Every verbal interaction implies a risk—or, in Bourdieu's terms (1977, 14), every exchange contains a challenge—since potential loss of face is involved. In engaging in such "face-threatening acts" (FTAs), one devises a

¹The theory of speech-acts develops this idea that words have the power to alter relationships. It asserts that every locutionary act (an utterance) is also an illocutionary act (having conventional force associated with it) and perhaps a perlocutionary act (having an effect on the addressee by the very utterance of the words). Speech-acts function as operations on context (Levinson 1983, 235-237). That is, "when a sentence is uttered more has taken place than merely the expression of its meaning; in addition, the set of background assumptions has been altered" (Levinson 1983, 276).

Although this theory focuses specifically on oral statements, it can be applied to textual statements as well. All words, whether spoken or written, have a performative force associated with them.

Especially in its emphasis on context-change, the theory of speech-acts is relevant to an analysis of polemic, since the polemical process certainly has the power to transform relationships by altering the perceptions of self and other.

strategy on the basis of anticipated sociological variables (Brown and Levinson 1978, 71-76). This strategy depends on the seriousness, or weightiness (W), of the FTA (x), which is a function of the social distance (D) between the speaker (S) and the addressee (H), the power (P) which H has over S, and the degree to which x is considered an imposition in a particular context (R_i). These variables are related, according to Brown and Levinson, in the following formula:

$$W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_i$$

This formula allows one to predict how cautious or how bold one should be in interaction so as to maximize her "face" (Levinson 1978, 76), or as Bourdieu would put it, to maintain her "sense of honor" (1977, 10-15).

All of these relationally formative dynamics attributed to verbal interaction in general are applicable to the polemical process in particular. Could not every polemical discourse be seen as a strategically constructed threat to the "face" (whether positive or negative) of the adversary or as a defense of the "face" of the polemicist? Are not the polemicist and adversary concerned above all else with their respective "sense of honor"? Brown and Levinson's formula provides a helpful tool for analyzing the contours of a particular polemic; it enables one to see an FTA in terms of the context of interaction, i.e., in terms of the relative power of, and social distance between, the polemicist and adversary.

The purpose of the polemical FTA is to transform this context of interaction to the polemicist's advantage. The polemicist wants to change the "common ground" to which her adversary is willing to assent, strategically making polemical assertions (just as one engaging in normal conversation strategically makes certain speech-acts) in order to bring her adversary's stance into ever greater congruence with her own. The polemicist will attempt to restructure the relationship between her and her adversary in such a way as to ensure her dominance. She will entice the adversary into "reasoning together." All of this is meant to create a tension in the mind of the adversary, an unpleasant "cognitive dissonance" which yearns for resolution (cf. Miller et al. 1984, 400ff.). The ultimate purpose of the polemicist, viz., to win over the adversary to her agenda, is accomplished if she can lead him to resolve the dissonance in line with her stance.

B. Relational Restructuring in the Treatise

How does all of this apply to Ibn Hazm's polemic in the *Treatise*? To be sure, Brown and Levinson's model, based on a simple speaker-addressee dichotomy, cannot be applied *simpliciter* to the polemic of the *Treatise*, which involves a more complex type of interaction involving the polemicist, primary and secondary audiences, and various adversaries. Nevertheless, this model provides analytical tools that will prove useful in the discussion to follow, in which we shall examine (1) the relationships Ibn Hazm deemed in need of change and (2) the means by which he attempted to effect such change.

1. Relationships in Need of Change

As we have seen, Ibn Hazm lived in a time of great social upheaval in al-Andalus. We saw how his early years were marked by Umayyad decline and Berber ascendancy, giving rise to political instability which directly affected his life. In his latter years, after the fall of the caliphate and the rise of the competing party kingdoms, Muslim unity was severely compromised and Muslim hegemony in al-Andalus seriously weakened. On the one hand, the ethnic tensions among the various Muslims groups (Arabs, Berbers, *Ṣaḡāliba*², neo-

²One of the more obscure, but nonetheless influential, groups in Islamic Spain was the *Ṣaḡāliba* (sing.: *Ṣaḡālib*), whose name has been rendered into English both as "Slavs" or "slaves." Both renderings indicate something of the group's origins.

In the tenth century, it became a common practice for the Franks to sell their Slavic captives, taken in battles in eastern Europe, as slaves to Andalusian Muslims. Usually young boys were purchased; they were then converted to Islam, arabized, and used in the military or in service to the court. The geographer Ibn Hawqal, writing in the second half of the tenth century, notes that *Ṣaḡāliba* eunuchs, "brought from the country of the Franks, where they were castrated," were especially esteemed; they were, it seems, often bought by Jewish merchants (trans. de Gayangos 1964 [1840], 1:380). Fair-skinned female *Ṣaḡāliba* were prized as concubines, their price varying according to their beauty and their talent as dancers and singers (Chejne 1974, 135; see also Golstein 1967-93, 1:130-147).

Because of their placement in such powerful institutions as the military and the court, these *Ṣaḡāliba* became a significant factor in Andalusian society. During his lengthy reign (912-961), when Spanish Islamic culture reached its apogee, 'Abd al-Rahmān III imported large numbers of *Ṣaḡāliba*, in part to neutralize the influence of the various Arab and Berber factions with which he had to contend. By the end of his reign there were over 3,750 of them in Córdoba (Wasserstein 1985, 25). Their number continued to grow (although it never exceeded 15,000 [Wasserstein 1985, 59]), and with this increase in number came a concomitant increase in power. The *Ṣaḡāliba* not only attained high administrative status; they also accumulated significant wealth and became highly cultured. By the declining years of the Umayyad rule, they were able to control the caliphate, placing proteges on the throne and de-throning opponents; nevertheless, they seem to have remained supportive of the Umayyad cause. In order to blunt this support, al-Manṣūr

Muslims) were exacerbated, weakening Muslim solidarity; on the other, relations between Muslims and *dhimmis* became increasingly familiar and therefore problematic from the standpoint of Islamic law.

According to the societal ideal propounded by Islamic law, Andalusian society should have consisted of an interlocking system of communities in which a united Muslim community exercised uncontested hegemony over the *dhimmi* communities, each of which was organized under its own leadership. That is, the Jewish and Christian populations would each form a discrete societal "pillar" enjoying a great deal of autonomy but submitting to the dominant Muslim "pillar."³ But these "pillars" did not always maintain their distinctness. Islamic law required that they do so, but in practice the stipulations of the law were compromised. Christians, Jews, and Muslims often collaborated to attain significant accomplishments in medieval Spain; their symbiosis produced one of the most intellectually productive civilizations of human history, excelling in such areas as linguistics, literature, history, geography, philosophy, religious studies, mysticism, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, physics, art, architecture, and music.⁴ Recall also that Jews often moved beyond their pillar into the Muslim mainstream; perhaps the most notable examples were Hasdai ibn Shaprūt and Samuel ibn Nagrela (see p. 141, note 14, above). Even though the *shari'a* placed strict limits on the interaction between Muslims and the *dhimmis*, everyday life in al-Andalus was more often than not characterized by profound mutual familiarity, especially between Muslims and the sizeable Christian population.⁵

enlisted the help of Berbers in establishing his Amīrid dynasty in opposition to the Umayyads. But by no means was the *Ṣaḡāliba*'s power broken. In Ibn Hazm's latter years, during the period of the party-kings, they established states in Denia, Tolosa, Valencia, and the Balears (Chejne 1974, 36, 114-115).

Thus, not only did hostilities *within* and *between* the Arab and Berber power blocs make for great societal instability in Islamic Spain; the influence of the *Ṣaḡāliba* also contributed to the cultural and political turmoil that beset al-Andalus in Ibn Hazm's day.

³This depiction of the society of al-Andalus as "pillared" draws from the modern sociological theory of consociation. See Lipshart 1977; Dogan and Pelassy 1984.

⁴For a detailed discussion of accomplishments in each of these disciplines, see Chejne 1974, 162-374.

⁵Ironically, Ibn Hazm himself exemplified the sort of interaction with *dhimmis* that made him uneasy. After all, he had knowledge of rabbinic and midrashic traditions. This suggests that he either gained access to Jewish teachings directly from the Jews or indirectly from sources written in Arabic about Jewish doctrine, perhaps by Christian polemicists. (Peter Alphonso [d. 1140], a convert to Christianity from Judaism, compiled in Latin an anthology of Jewish texts to be

2. Ibn Ḥazm's Intention to Restructure Relationships

Ibn Ḥazm found this disintegration of pillarization in al-Andalus to be extremely disconcerting. He felt that because of egregious deviation from the societal order sanctioned by Islamic law, the future of Islam in Spain was at stake. His polemic in the *Treatise* gives expression to this agitation; it is not motivated so much by abstract theological concerns as by a perceived need to restructure societal relations gone awry. His purpose is not primarily to win converts, even though he attacks Jews and Christians as the overt subjects of his polemic; rather, it is to incite his readers to reshape their society before it becomes too late.

a. Characterization of Fellow Muslims

This is evident in the way he depicts many of his fellow Muslims in al-Andalus. He characterizes them as being far too tolerant of Jews and Christians. This is indicated both implicitly and explicitly in the text. For example, he challenges those Muslims who maintain that the Torah and Gospel are not corrupted, pointing to Qur'anic verses that indicate otherwise: e.g., 3:71 ("Ye People of the Book! Why do ye clothe truth with falsehood and conceal the truth while ye have knowledge?"), 2:146 ("But some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know"), and 3:78 ("There is among them a section who distort the Book with their tongues: (As they read) you would think it is a part of the Book, but it is no part of the Book. And they say, 'That is from God,' but it is not from God"). How, Ibn Ḥazm asks, can a Muslim accept Jewish and Christian scriptures as authentic when Jews and Christians say that their holy texts have no predictions of Muḥammad's coming? A Muslim cannot even accept some of their texts as authentic: If you accept some, Ibn Ḥazm argues, you must accept them all [1:215]! In defense of his intolerant attitude, Ibn Ḥazm cites the Qur'an itself:

used in polemics against Jews. Other compilations existed as well [Williams 1935, 393]. Already in Ibn Ḥazm's time a number of similar anthologies, translated into Arabic, were probably available to him.) In either case, he would have had extensive interaction with *dhimmi*s to acquire the amount of information he needed for his polemic in the *Treatise*. Moreover, as we shall argue in the Excursus at the conclusion of this chapter, Ibn Ḥazm had sufficient contact with Andalusian Christians (probably Mozarabs) to secure a copy of their Bible, translated into Arabic from a Latin *Vorlage*.

Muhammad is Allah's apostle. Those who follow him are ruthless to the unbelievers but merciful to one another. You see them adoring on their knees, seeking the grace of Allah and his good will. Their marks are on their faces, the traces of their prostrations. Thus they are described in the Torah and in the Gospel; they are like the seed which puts forth its shoot and strengthens it, so that it rises stout and firm upon its stalk, delighting the sowers. Through them Allah seeks to enrage the unbelievers (48:29) [1:215-216].

The description of Muslims which this passage claims can be found in the Torah and Gospel is, in fact, not part of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Thus Muslims must accept one of two conclusions. Either the Qur'an is untrue, or the Jews and Christians have altered their books [1:216].

In support of his case for a vigorous attack against Jews and Christians, Ibn Ḥazm cites a *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayra⁶ (d. 678) to the effect that Muslims should neither give credence to the Jews nor contradict them. Rather, Muslims should simply say that they accept "what has been revealed to us and revealed to you." Muslims are to accept or reject Jewish and Christian scriptures on the basis of what Muḥammad has revealed; that is the sole criterion. As for those contents of the Torah and Gospel neither confirmed nor rejected by the unadulterated revelation of the Qur'an, Muslims must reserve judgment. For instance, they must reserve judgment on the prophetic inspiration of those texts in the Jewish scriptures whose authors are not mentioned in the Qur'an [1:216].

Ibn Ḥazm also cites a *ḥadīth* of Ibn al-'Abbās⁷ (d. ca. 687), according to which Muḥammad asked Muslims why they even bother to ask Jews and Christians what their scriptures say, since those scriptures are altered. Muslims should have recourse only to the Qur'an, the text of which is pure, expressing the revelation from God himself. Jews and Christians, by contrast, wrote their scriptures with their own hands [1:216-217].

Finally, Ibn Ḥazm adduces a *ḥadīth* attributed to the second caliph, 'Umar (reigned 634-644), in which a Jewish convert to Islam, Ka'b al-Ahbar, presented a Torah to 'Umar, asking whether it should be read. 'Umar responded, "If you know what it is that God revealed to Moses, read it at all hours of the day and night," implying that in the present text of the Torah truth is so intertwined with falsehood that it is impossible to distinguish one from the other [1:217].

⁶Abū Hurayra al-Dawṣī al-Yamānī was a companion of Muḥammad, and some 3500 *ḥadīths* are attributed to him; see Robson 1960.

⁷Muslims consider 'Abdallāh ibn al-'Abbās, the son of Muḥammad's paternal uncle, to be one of the greatest personages of the first generation of Muslims, famous for both his scholarly achievement as well as his political and military exploits; see Vecchia Vaglieri 1960, 40-41.

In short, Ibn Ḥazm sees Muslims as too tolerant of the People of the Book with whom they lived. By tolerating them (and their teachings) to an excessive degree, the truths of Islam are in danger of being compromised. Muslims need to rouse themselves, to recognize falsehood as falsehood, and to repudiate it definitively. They must "persevere in the grace in which God has established [them] ... without falling into error" [1:224]. They must be careful to accept nothing except what is confirmed by the Qur'an and those *ḥadīths* with *isnāds* extending back to Muḥammad, recognizing that everything not consistent with these is false [1:224]. To be sure, Ibn Ḥazm had strong opinions, shaped by his adherence to Zāhiri doctrine concerning what was authentically Islamic, and this motivated him to assail those Muslims whom he considered heterodox. Even if his ostensible task in the *Treatise* was to denigrate Jews and Christians, he did so, as we have already noted in Chapter V, by associating them with Muslim heretics. He attempted to cast aspersions on Jews by associating them with Christians and Shī'ites, and on Christians by associating them with Jews, Manichaeans, and heretical Muslims. But this ploy of ascribing "guilt by association" was double-edged. Not only did it serve to debase Jews and Christians; it also served to denigrate Shī'ites, *bāṭiniya*, and other Muslim "dissidents" by linking them with the reprehensible Jews and Christians!

Thus Ibn Ḥazm reserves his most penetrating criticism in the Section for his own coreligionists whom he feels have deviated from the true path of Islam. In his opinion, Muslims have been corrupted by Jewish and Christian influence. They have lost their zeal for combatting the errors of the *dhimmis*. They have become too accepting of blurred boundaries.⁸

⁸Ibn Ḥazm's plan for societal re-structuring can be expressed in terms of the categories used by Bateson (1972, 67-68; cf. Watzlawick et al. 1967, 67-69) in his analysis of cultural differentiation. Bateson speaks of two types of progressive differentiation, or schismogenesis, between groups: symmetrical and complementary. In the former, two groups interact such that each pushes the other into manifesting the same pattern of behavior as itself. For instance, if group A boasts, group B responds by boasting, which, in turn, encourages group A to engage in further boasting, etc. This dynamic leads ultimately to hostility and to systemic breakdown. In complementary schismogenesis, on the other hand, the behavior of group A is not mirrored in the response of group B. In other words, the reply of each group to the other is different in kind, though the two replies precipitate each other. For example, if group A manifests an assertive pattern of behavior and group B responds with a submissive one, the two groups are interacting complementarily. "This schismogenesis," Bateson notes, "unless it is restrained, leads to progressive unilateral distortion of the personalities of both groups, which results in mutual hostility between them and must end in the breakdown of the system" (Bateson 1972, 68).

What Ibn Ḥazm hopes to foster through his polemic is complementary schismogenesis between Muslims, on the one hand, and Jews and Christians, on the other. In a cultural setting in which differentiation between Muslims and non-

b. The Berbers as the Chief Culprits

Of course, the Muslims that he is most interested in discrediting are the Berber rulers that carved up al-Andalus into kingdoms. They are the real culprits in that they have flagrantly transgressed the requirements of the *dhimma* because of their lust for power and political advantage. Ibn Ḥazm expresses such sentiments in an opusculum included in a manuscript discovered in the library of the Muḥammad Fāṭih Mosque in Istanbul in the early part of this century and translated into Spanish by Asin-Palacios (1934). After decrying the unjust taxes imposed by Muslim rulers on their Muslim subjects, Ibn Ḥazm complains that these rulers are guilty of violating the laws of Islam, giving rise to an "infamous scandal ... which undoes one by one the knots which Islam ties, forging a new religion" (Asin-Palacios 1934, 42). He then exclaims:

By God, I swear that if the tyrants supposed that they could further the success of their undertakings by the religion of the cross, they would surely hasten to profess it! In effect, we have seen them ask help of the Christians and permit them to seize the women of the Muslims, their children, and their men to carry them off as captives to their lands. Often they protect them [i.e., the Christians] in their attacks against that which is most inviolable in the land [of al-Andalus] and associate themselves with them in order to be more secure. And at times they willingly hand over to them the cities and the fortresses, depopulating them of Muslims to fill them with belfries! May God curse all of them and make them submit to the dominion of any one of their swords! (Asin-Palacios 1934, 42-43).

We may speculate that Ibn Ḥazm felt justified in so sharply denouncing the Berber rulers of his day on both religious and personal grounds. He clearly was aghast at how these rulers flagrantly violated Islamic law by entering into alliances with non-Muslims, at the expense of their fellow Muslims. Moreover, he himself had suffered personal setbacks as a result of this illicit collaboration. One need not resort to "psychohistorical" speculation to conclude that Ibn Ḥazm resented the frustration of his own political career (described in Chapter I) while Jews and Christians assumed positions of great political power in the Berber kingdoms. He had been displaced by *dhimmis* who, according to the *sharī'a*, were not even permitted to rise to the offices that the Berber

Muslims had been de-emphasized, Ibn Ḥazm wanted to see sharp boundaries established. In other words, he favored communal schismogenesis. Symmetrical schismogenesis, however, implies a certain parity between the two interacting groups—something which Ibn Ḥazm was not willing to concede. Thus, he strove to precipitate a complementary schismogenesis between Muslims and *dhimmis* in which the former were clearly dominant and the latter duly submissive.

rulers were conferring on them! While he—as a Muslim!—had been persecuted and several times driven into exile, these non-Muslim usurpers enjoyed official approbation and protection! The fact that "his unsettled life was filled with anxiety and disillusionment in the midst of animosity and danger" (Chejne 1982, 31) probably accounts, at least in part, for the vitriol he directed against the kings. Undergirding these legal and personal factors fueling Ibn Ḥazm's anti-Berber sentiment was the racist frame of mind, according to which "Arabs" like Ibn Ḥazm scorned the north African Berbers as "lesser Muslims."

c. Political Factors

Thus, Ibn Ḥazm's intention in the *Treatise* is to achieve a political re-structuring of al-Andalus by bringing down these Berber rulers. Because it was not safe for him to attack them directly, he does so indirectly: by attacking the Jews and Christians whom they have illicitly favored in their political domains. By thoroughly discrediting the *dhimmis* so visibly linked with Berber rule in the party kingdoms, Ibn Ḥazm hoped to turn the sentiments of his audience against these "pseudo-Muslims" who now were shaping the fate of al-Andalus. Let us now consider in greater detail (1) the political rationale undergirding Ibn Ḥazm's polemic and (2) the constraints he imposes on it as a result of political factors.

(1) Political Rationale

But is it not extravagant to claim that Ibn Ḥazm actually sought to foment insurrection against these rulers? Not at all. In fact, Ibn Ḥazm's political theory, articulated in the *Fiṣal*, indicates that he felt that such insurrection was not only permissible; it was *obligatory* for true Muslims.⁹

⁹Ibn Ḥazm's conviction that a caliph deviating from the norms of *shariʿa* should be overthrown was by no means characteristic of mainstream Islam. To be sure, the Khārijites, a small radical dissident sect which arose early in Islam in reaction to 'Alī's willingness to negotiate with his adversaries at the Battle of Siffin in 657, held that grave sinners in the *umma* should be considered unbelievers and expelled from the community; some even went so far as to execute these sinners. Thus, the Khārijites considered it obligatory to overthrow any caliph who proved himself morally unworthy of his office. Conversely, they held that any Muslim male who was morally qualified, regardless of ancestry, could be elected caliph. The vast majority of Muslims, however, adopted a much more moderate stance. Stressing the divine will as determinative of all things, they considered their rulers to have been placed in power by God himself and were therefore to be obeyed, regardless of their moral caliber. A number of *ḥadīths* arose in defense of such a position. One states that even if the Commander of the Faithful is a mutilated black

In the fourth part of the *Fiṣal*,¹⁰ Ibn Ḥazm affirms the necessity of supreme leadership as expressed in the imamate (of which the caliphate and the emirate are functional equivalents, in his view). The supreme leader must be unique; that is, there cannot simultaneously be more than one legitimate imam. He must be of Quraysh lineage; according to Ibn Ḥazm, he must be a direct descendant of Fīhr ibn Mālik, an eleventh-generation ancestor of Muḥammad [4:87-90] (cf. Turki 1982, 82-83). Ibn Ḥazm rejects the doctrines of the imamate obtaining among the Muslim sects he considers to be heterodox—especially the Shī'ites, with their doctrine of an infallible imam descended from 'Alī [4:95-97].

He then discusses the conditions that one must fulfill in order to be a legitimate imam (or caliph or emir). The ruler need not be the most excellent of all men. It is necessary only that he be (1) of Quraysh lineage, (2) pubescent or older, (3) capable of thinking in a rational manner, (4) male, (5) Muslim, (6) legitimately placed at the head of the government,¹¹ (7) cognizant of the legal requirements incumbent upon every Muslim, and (8) observant of moral and religious precepts so as to avoid scandal [4:166]. Ibn Ḥazm notes that it is also desirable (though not absolutely essential for the validity of the caliphate) (1) that the caliph know all the legal requirements pertaining to worship, politics, and the administration of justice; (2) that he fulfill all of these requirements, without neglecting one; (3) that he avoid all grave sins, whether secret or public; and (4) that he conceal his lesser sins, should he commit any [4:166-167]. Even if the conduct of the caliph inspires repugnance among the people, they are nonetheless obligated to obey him as long as he does not contradict the law of God. Ideally, he should fulfill strictly the laws of the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the Prophet [4:167].

slave, he is to be obeyed (Levy 1965, 291). Another claims that Muḥammad taught "obedience to me is obedience to God and obedience to the imam is obedience to me; also rebellion against me is rebellion against God and rebellion against the imam is rebellion against me" (Levy 1965, 291, citing Abū Yūsuf, *Kitāb al-Qurān*, pp. 5f.). Ibn Qutayba (d. 889), in his work on moral training, *Uyūn al-akhbār*, taught that "if a man is just, then reward is due him and gratitude from you. If he is tyrannous, then the burden of sin is his, and it is your duty to be patient (Levy 1965, 291). The great theologian al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) espoused this moderate position. In essence, then, Ibn Ḥazm, by advocating insurrection against morally compromised rulers, aligned himself not with mainstream Islam but with sectarian Muslims.

¹⁰See Chapter III, note 1, p. 58, above.

¹¹Ibn Ḥazm cites three legitimate procedures by which a caliph can be designated. He considers the best to be designation by the previous caliph. If, however, the caliph dies without appointing a successor, any man worthy of the caliphate can claim it as long as no one opposes him. Finally, the dying caliph can entrust the election of his successor to one or more men whom he considers trustworthy [4:167-170].

But the question inevitably arises: what should be the response of the people when an unjust or reprobate caliph rules over them? Ibn Hazm begins his response to this question by articulating the principle underlying his thought on the matter: every Muslim is obligated to do what the religious laws require and to avoid every infraction of them [4:171]. After evaluating the evidence from the Qur'an and *hadiths* [4:171-174], he concludes that it is not only permissible but obligatory for Muslims to take up arms and wage holy war against a ruler who has violated the *shari'a* and exercises unjust dominion over his subjects, just as they would against non-Muslims who threatened their well-being. If a ruler refuses to fulfill any of the necessary prescriptions of Islamic law, he is to be opposed; it is essential that the people rise up against him, overthrow him, and name another in his place who will restore justice in accord with the stipulations of the *shari'a* [4:175-176].

In the course of his argument for the forcible overthrow of unjust rulers, Ibn Hazm makes the following statement, which is directly relevant to our attempt to understand the *Treatise's* polemical purpose:

And what would you say of a sultan who put Jews at the head of his kingdom and Christians in the ranks of his army, and who submitted Muslims to the *jizya*, and who put the children of the Muslims to the sword, and who declared adultery against their women to be licit, or who beheaded as many Muslims as he encountered and seized their wives and sons in order to sin publicly with them, and who, in spite of all this, continued to insist that they professed Islam without ceasing to make the ritual prayer? If you respond that, even so, it is not licit to rise up against him, we would therefore add that since that ruler does not leave even one Muslim alive, he will necessarily arrive at a moment in which only he himself and the infidels will survive. And if, in such a case, his adversaries still consider it licit to submit meekly to that tyrant, they would deny Islam and condemn it to disappear. If, on the other hand, they respond (as indeed they do respond) that, yes, in such a case it is necessary to rebel against him and to fight him, we would then argue against them thus: And what if he only killed nine-tenths of the Muslims, or else all of them but one, and submitted their wives to slavery and confiscated their goods in equal proportion? Because if then they refrained from rising up against him, they would contradict themselves; and if they believed it obligatory to rise up against him, then we would respond by posing to them the problem in hypothetical form, with a smaller number of victims each time, and we would continue to question them thus until arriving at the case in which only one Muslim was assassinated, or only one woman was violated, or only one person's capital was confiscated, or only one scratch on the skin was unjustly perpetrated. And if they denied the right to rebellion in any of these minimal cases, they would contradict themselves and irrationally decide for that which is not licit; on the other hand, if they considered rebellion in such cases to be obligatory, they would return to true doctrine [4:175].

This remark lends strong support to our thesis concerning Ibn Hazm's purpose in writing the *Treatise*. Without naming them, he is here finding fault with the Berber rulers who in their respective domains have blatantly violated Islamic law on a variety of counts. It is important to note the criticism to which he gives priority: that they have put Jews in positions of powers in their governments and Christians in their armies. To his mind, the clearest indication of the unworthiness of these rulers is their having favored these non-Muslims while oppressing their coreligionists—in total disregard of the requirements of the *shari'a*. We can therefore understand why, in encouraging his readers to overthrow these "pseudo-Muslim" rulers, he attacks the primary symbols of their lawlessness, viz., the Jews and Christians they have allowed to rise to inappropriate prominence within *dār al-Islām*. By discrediting Jews and Christians in the *Treatise*, Ibn Hazm is not just giving expression to his theological convictions; he is intent on bringing down the Andalusian political structure that makes such "injustice" possible. He is stoking the fires of rebellion through this text. By motivating his readers to repudiate the untrustworthy Jews and Christians, he is in fact motivating them to repudiate the rulers who have empowered them.

(2) Operative Constraints Based on Political Factors Affecting Ibn Hazm's Personal Welfare

For political reasons, however, Ibn Hazm could not level his criticisms of their rule directly at them. As we indicated in Chapter I, he had repeatedly suffered imprisonment, social marginalization, and exile as a result of his alienation of political and religious authorities. Wishing to avoid a recurrence of such experiences, he restrained his polemic in the *Treatise* on the basis of political considerations.

In other words, he could not issue "face-threatening acts" (FTAs) directly at the Berber rulers. The equation given by Brown and Levinson (1978, 76; see section A, above) for determining the weightiness of an FTA helps to explain why. Recall that, according to the equation, an FTA's weightiness is the sum of the social distance between the speaker and addressee [$D(S,H)$], the degree of power the addressee exerts over the speaker [$P(H,S)$], and the risk involved in issuing the FTA in that particular context: $W_x = D(S,H) + P(H,S) + R_x$. In Ibn Hazm's case, he and the Berber rulers were mutually antagonistic; consequently, the social distance (D) between them was great. Furthermore, the Berber rulers exercised uncontested power over him, thus making P very great. It is no wonder, then, that in the *Treatise*

Ibn Hazm issued no FTA directly at the Berber rulers: no matter how tempered a challenge (R) he issued to these rulers, the weightiness of the FTA (W) would be so great as to compromise further what little security he had managed to establish for himself. This was a risk that he was apparently not willing to take.

As a result, Ibn Hazm issued his FTAs indirectly, through virulent attacks on the Jews and Christians with whom the Berber rulers had associated themselves. These FTAs could be extreme, in that neither the social distance between Ibn Hazm and the *dhimmis* (D) nor their relative power (P) was very great; therefore, no matter how unrestrained Ibn Hazm's attack (R), the weightiness of the FTA would never become so great as to create significant disadvantage for him. Such attacks, after all, were likely to be acceptable to his readers from the ranks of Islamic legal scholars. Even if they had accommodationist tendencies, these readers would not be shocked by the fact that Ibn Hazm, as a Muslim religious scholar, assailed the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Ibn Hazm assumed he could count on his audience to be at least somewhat receptive to his criticisms of the *dhimmi* religions: no matter how tolerant they had become, these Muslims still maintained some suspicion of non-Muslims. Thus he felt little constraint in his attack on the People of the Book in the *Treatise*. Through it he hoped to augment his audience's biases against Jews and Christians and therefore to encourage an anti-accommodationist attitude among them.

To be sure, Ibn Hazm does issue direct challenges to his Muslim audience, as we noted in Section B.2.a, above. However, in challenging them, he does not make them his adversaries because he needs their support. The FTAs directed at them, therefore, are tempered. That is, although the social distance (D) and relative power (P) between Ibn Hazm and his coreligionists are low, he does not want to offend the very audience on whom implementation of his vision for societal restructuring depends. As a result, he keeps the weightiness (W) of the FTAs directed at them low, challenging them while minimizing the risk involved. In so doing, he avoids alienating his readers while creating in their minds a dissonance which he hopes will be resolved by their shifting toward his viewpoint.

Because he had a pragmatic agenda for societal reform, Ibn Hazm constrained his polemic in the *Treatise* in ways determined by political factors. These constraints, together with those discussed in Chapter VI (i.e., constraints arising from his attachment to classical rhetorical techniques and from his strong views of personal worthiness as

expressed in his *adab*), influenced the manner in which he reshaped the literary tradition focusing on *tahrif* which he had received.

C. Conclusion

Bristling at the sight of Jews and Christians gaining so many privileges in the party kingdoms, Ibn Hazm attempts to show in the *Treatise* that the *dhimmis*, by virtue of their faulty scriptures and deviant religious practices, are scornful of sacred things and therefore totally undeserving of the status the Berbers have accorded them. Consequently, they and the rulers who fostered their rise to power should be opposed! He thus attempts to incite his audiences to political action.

How successful was Ibn Hazm in this endeavor? It is difficult to answer this question with any certainty. The anti-accommodationist agenda fostered by Ibn Hazm clearly gained the ascendancy under the Almoravids and Almohads, who dominated al-Andalus from the mid-eleventh to the late twelfth century. During their rule, there prevailed the kind of intolerance and adversarial spirit between Muslims and *dhimmis* for which Ibn Hazm called. Perhaps Ibn Hazm's polemic helped to prepare the way for Andalusian acceptance of the sectarian policies of the Almoravids and Almohads. It has even been suggested by Huici Miranda (1956, 32ff., 95ff.) that Ibn Tūmart, the founder of the Almohad movement, was influenced by Ibn Hazm's thought. Moreover, Ibn Hazm's polemic continued to draw attention in theological circles long after his lifetime. As we noted in Chapter II.F.2, Samau'al al-Maghribi (d. 1175) almost certainly knew of the *Treatise* and drew from it in writing his own polemic against Judaism. Furthermore, the Spanish rabbi Solomon ibn Adret of Barcelona (d. ca. 1310) wrote a book refuting the anti-Judaic polemics of an unidentified Muslim author who, in all likelihood, was Ibn Hazm (Schreiner 1894; Perles 1863). Thus the influence of the *Treatise* and other writings of Ibn Hazm endured, and perhaps even increased, after his death in 1064.

EXCURSUS

What Biblical Version Did Ibn Ḥazm Use?

The *Treatise* is replete with biblical quotations, some of which deviate significantly from the Masoretic Text (MT) and the Septuagint (LXX), as we have indicated. What biblical version was Ibn Ḥazm using? In what language was he reading it? Where did he procure this text?

I maintain that Ibn Ḥazm was using an Arabic Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments, which originated in Christian circles and was based on a Latin *Vorlage*. Such a text was probably used among Mozarabic Christians of al-Andalus. It is important to note that the manuscript studies of Baumstark (1934:232-233) have shown that in his citations from the gospels in the *Treatise* Ibn Ḥazm quotes the tenth-century Arabic translation of Isaac Velásquez (Ishāq ibn Balashk), which was based on an Old Latin text of the gospels strongly influenced by the Vulgate and preserving elements from the Diatessaron (Graf 1947, 1:167; cf. Baumstark 1934). There are indications that not only the citations from the gospels in the *Treatise* but also those from the Old Testament, derive from a Latin *Vorlage*. Let us consider a few of these indications.

In the MT, Is. 66:9 reads, "Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth?" says the Lord; 'shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb?' says your God" (RSV). In the LXX, it reads "I myself raised this expectation; yet thou didst not remember Me," saith the Lord. 'Behold, did I not make her who beareth and her who is barren?' saith thy God" (trans. Thomson 1954). In attacking this passage, however, Ibn Ḥazm

claims that it depicts God as engendering children for himself [1:209], a criticism not relevant to either the Hebrew or Greek reading. It does, however, pertain to the passage as rendered in the Vulgate, in which it reads, "Shall not I that make others to bring forth children myself bring forth," saith the Lord? "Shall I, that give generation to others, be barren?" saith the Lord thy God? (trans. Douay Version).¹ Thus, the text Ibn Ḥazm cites derives from the Latin (probably the Vulgate) rather than from the Hebrew or Greek.

Moreover, peculiarities in the Arabic translation of certain biblical passages quoted in the *Treatise* can be explained most adequately with reference to a Latin Vorlage. We shall consider three examples of this.

First, Ibn Ḥazm's version of Dt. 31:26 reads, "Take this book and place it in the altar and put upon it the ark of the covenant." The MT, LXX, and Vulgate all say simply that the book is to be placed in (or by) the side of the ark of the covenant." Why does Ibn Ḥazm's source read "in the altar" rather than "in the side"? I would suggest that the Arabic Bible he cites is based on a misreading (either by the translator himself or by the copyist who produced the Latin used by the translator) of the Latin text, which reads *tollite librum istum et ponite eum in latere arcae foederis*. If, however, *latere* is misread as *altare*, "in the side" becomes "in the altar." Thus, the error found in Ibn Ḥazm's biblical text can be explained in terms of the corruption or mistranslation of a Latin substratum.

Second, Ibn Ḥazm translates a phrase of Dt. 32:10 as "he ... guarded him as hair protects the eye," while the MT, LXX, and Vulgate all read "and he ... guarded them as the apple of his eye." Why this difference? Again, I would suggest that it can be explained with reference to the Vulgate text, which reads: *custodiuit quasi pupillam oculi sui*. If *pupillam* is misread as *capillam*, and if one also does not pay close attention to the case endings, one could translate the phrase as follows: "he guarded as hair (guards) his eye."

Third, rather than rendering Dt. 32:33 as "I will heap evils upon them," as the MT, LXX, and Vulgate all do, Ibn Ḥazm's biblical text renders it "I will heap my power upon them." How is this to be explained? If *super eos mala* ("upon them evils") is misread as *super ius mea* ("upon [them] my power"), the error is explained. This explanation is supported further by the fact that the word *meas* is found later in the same verse (*super eos mala et sagittas meas complebo in eis*). The eye of a copyist or translator could easily have jumped from *mala* to the similar

word *meas* after *eos* (misread as *ius*), thus producing the textual corruption or mistranslation.

These passages suggest that Ibn Ḥazm's citations from the Old Testament, like those from the gospels, are taken from an Arabic translation of a Latin text of the Bible.

¹The Latin reads: *Numquid ego qui alios parere facio ipse non pariam dicit Dominus; si ego qui generationem ceteris tribuo sterilis ero ait Dominus Deus tuus.*

CHAPTER VIII

Summary and Conclusion

In this study we have examined both what Ibn Hazm said in the polemical exegesis of the *Treatise on Contradictions and Lies* and what he hoped to accomplish through it in the milieu of eleventh-century Andalusia. In other words, we have examined both the content and the context of the *Treatise* and related the one to the other.

In summarizing our findings, it will be helpful for us to use the categories of literary criticism proposed by Burke in his *Grammar of Motives* (1945), out of which developed a form of rhetorical analysis known as dramatistic criticism. Burke's conviction that literature is a form of symbolic action in which authors not only say something but also act out (in a sort of drama) their inner psychological dynamics is consonant with the approach taken in this study. The categories of dramatistic criticism, therefore, are particularly well-suited to the task of stating our conclusions.

These categories are fivefold (hence "dramatistic" criticism is also known as "pentadic" criticism): act ("what took place, in thought or deed"), scene ("the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred"), agent ("what person or kind of person ... performed the act"), agency ("what means or instruments he used"), and purpose (the "why" behind the action) (Burke 1969 [1945], xv). On the basis of these five central categories of "dramatism," let us proceed to state our conclusions.

A. The Act: The Composition of the *Treatise*

We have seen that, in composing the *Treatise*, Ibn Hazm was continuing an Islamic literary tradition that can be traced back to the Qur'an itself, a tradition examining the authenticity of the earlier (i.e., Jewish and Christian) scriptures. Thus, the *Treatise* must not be considered in isolation but within the context of a well-established literary genre, numerous examples of which we described in Chapter II.

Nevertheless, the *Treatise* is unique in a number of respects. As we saw, previous works considering the question of *tahrif*, i.e., whether the Jewish and Christian scriptures had undergone corruption, expressed a wide-ranging spectrum of views. At one end of the spectrum were those authors who saw the earlier scriptures as trustworthy—perhaps misinterpreted by the Jews and Christians, but textually reliable. Such authors tended to view the Torah and Gospel as sources to be used in Muslim apologetics, especially for proving that the advent of Muhammad and the legitimacy of his prophethood had been foretold by the prophets recognized by the Jews and the Christians. At the other end were those who saw the texts of the earlier scriptures as hopelessly corrupt, having suffered either willful distortion at the hands of such culprits as Ezra and Paul or accidental distortion as a result of historical vicissitudes. Such authors deemed the Torah and Gospel totally untrustworthy, useless as sources of truth unless they could be validated by Muslim sources. It is to this latter viewpoint that Ibn Hazm tended. Though he conceded that there were some passages in the Jewish and Christian scriptures that managed to escape the ravages of *tahrif*, these, he held, were few and far between. The overwhelming majority of the *Treatise* is devoted to proving this contention.

In the *Treatise*, Ibn Hazm took the literary tradition centering on the issue of *tahrif* to hitherto unknown levels of detail and rancor. The earliest examples of the *tahrif*-tradition were quite general, making sweeping claims unsubstantiated by specific proofs. However, progressively detailed arguments, replete with specific examples, were developed by authors through the ninth and tenth centuries C.E. Ibn Hazm represents the apex of this process: Such a detailed exegetical argument for *tahrif* as presented in the *Treatise* was unknown in the centuries preceding and immediately following Ibn Hazm. The *Treatise* was a watershed work in this regard. Furthermore, the combative and vitriolic tone of the *Treatise* certainly set it apart from other works in the *tahrif*-tradition. In short, no other author analyzing the authenticity of

the Jewish and Christian scriptures brought such rigor and antagonism to the task as did Ibn Hazm.

Thus, the "act" which this study has examined, viz., the composition of the *Treatise on Contradiction and Lies*, is noteworthy in itself. Its significance, however, is magnified when one considers this "act" in conjunction with its "scene."

B. The Scene: Al-Andalus of the Eleventh Century

The setting in which the *Treatise* was composed was volatile. Centrifugal societal forces had gathered great strength by the mid-eleventh century. We have examined this upheaval in detail in Chapter I, considering its political and socio-cultural aspects.

The instability of eleventh-century Andalus had a pre-history extending back to the Muslim conquest of Spain in the early eighth century. From the onset of Islamic domination, tensions existed—primarily between the Arab "upperclass," on the one hand, and other Muslim groups, including the Berbers, the *Ṣaḡālība*, and those of the indigenous population who converted to Islam (the "neo-Muslims"), on the other. These tensions had profound political reverberations, leading to the downfall of the Arab Umayyad dynasty and the concomitant rise of Berber influence. We have argued that this Arab-Berber antagonism underlies the process through which, and the purpose for which, the *Treatise* was composed.

But this Arab-Berber antagonism was complicated further by the presence of the *dhimmī* (Jewish and Christian) communities in al-Andalus. Though theoretically subservient to the Muslim majority (in accord with the requirements of Islamic law), these minority communities were allowed to overstep the legal restrictions which were to govern their status and attained a level of influence in Andalusian society that made them important players in the political arena of Ibn Hazm's time. Especially bothersome to those Andalusian Muslims committed to implementation of the Islamic societal ideal (which, as we argued in Chapter VII, called for a "pillarized" society in which the Christian and Jewish "pillars," though enjoying considerable autonomy, were to be submissive to the dominant Muslim "pillar") were the Jews who rose to great prominence in the courts of the Muslim party kings and the Christians who, in daily social intercourse, presumed to interact with Muslims as equals.

Foremost among those disturbed by these intracomunal tensions among Muslims and the "illegal" status of *dhimmīs* within

Andalusian society was Ibn Ḥazm, the "actor" with whom we have been primarily concerned.

C. The Actor: Ibn Ḥazm

The political and socio-cultural upheaval described in the preceding section directly affected the life of the *Treatise's* author. As we saw in Chapter I, Ibn Ḥazm remained throughout his life a steadfast supporter of the Umayyad cause. He thus situated himself squarely in the pro-Arab camp, even though it seems that he himself may not have been of Arab ethnic extraction. His pro-Umayyad stance made him resent the Berbers who came to assume more and more power in al-Andalus.

This resentment probably had its origin in his childhood. When Cordoba fell to the Berbers in 1013, Ibn Ḥazm and his family were forced to endure great hardship. After the fall of Córdoba, Ibn Ḥazm showed continuing contempt for the Berbers by aligning himself with pro-Umayyad movements. His conversion to the Zāhiri legal school, noted for its literalism and conservatism, only confirmed his scorn for the Berbers, whom he saw as egregiously neglectful of the *shariʿa*, especially in the favor they showed to Jews and Christians to the detriment of Muslims. While Jews rose to positions of great prominence in the various party kingdoms, most of which were ruled by Berber dynasties, Ibn Ḥazm suffered imprisonment, marginalization, and exile; his political career was cut short. He was embittered by the fact that while he, though a Muslim, was denied advancement, non-Muslims attained great prominence at the Berber courts and in the Berber armies. And while Jews and Christians enjoyed what he considered to be an excessive tolerance under these Muslim rulers, he was treated like a pariah. As he lived out his latter years, he attempted to avenge himself through his pen. The chief enemies he sought to overcome were these Berbers who had so offended his sense of political rectitude (as expressed in his political writing) and his standards of personal integrity (as expressed in his *adab*).

His personal security was so tenuous, however, that he could not attack these Berber rulers directly. Through what "agency," then, could he accomplish his end?

D. The Agency: Polemical Attack through Exegesis

He chose to do so, therefore, by attacking those whom the Berbers had illicitly favored, viz., the Jews and Christians. If these *dhimmi*s were

shown to be thoroughly untrustworthy, then so were the rulers who had allowed them to rise to such prominence.

But how could the untrustworthiness of the Jews and Christians be established? To do so, Ibn Ḥazm turned to an examination of their scriptures. If these could be shown to be replete with flaws, and hence untrustworthy, then so were those religions based on them and the people who accepted them as authoritative.

In the *Treatise*, therefore, Ibn Ḥazm builds a polemic on the basis of exegesis. We have indicated in Chapters III and IV how he analyzes the sacred texts of the Jews and Christians with the intention of proving their corruption. In proceeding through the Old Testament and extra-biblical texts deemed authoritative by the Jews, he faults them on a number of counts, finding blasphemies, factual errors, absurdities, and contradictions in them. He charges, moreover, that they demean the prophets (in violation of *ʾiṣma*, the Islamic doctrine of the infallibility of the prophets) and that they teach *shirk* and divine filiation. He also questions the transmission of both Testaments, finding reason to believe that the pristine texts of both were lost through the course of the centuries as a result of historical circumstances and willful deception on the part of certain personages in Jewish and Christian history.

To be sure, he emphasizes different approaches in the two parts of the *Treatise*. In criticizing the sacred texts of the Jews, he focuses more on their arithmetical, historical, and geographical errors, as well as on the factual absurdities and impossibilities they contain, than he does in his analysis of the sacred texts of the Christians. In the latter he concentrates on the demeaning depiction of Christ (who, as a prophet, was perfect, according to the doctrine of *ʾiṣma*) and on the Christian doctrine of the divine Sonship of Christ (which he considers an obvious example of *shirk*). In any case, in example after example, he argues that the Jewish and Christian scriptures are rife with textual corruptions; in so doing, he substantiates the doctrine of *tahrif*.

The corruption of the Jewish and Christian scriptures, Ibn Ḥazm argues further, is reflected in the corruption of the Jews and Christians themselves. As indicated in Chapter V, he delivers stinging reproaches against both groups in an attempt to evoke the prejudicial feelings of his audience and perhaps to salve a sense of insecurity among Andalusian Muslims caused by the attractiveness of *dhimmi* culture. His attacks against the two *dhimmi* communities manifest different emphases. He criticizes the Jews for their gullibility, treachery, duplicity, and vileness; but he seems most offended by their factiousness, i.e., their group loyalty (*ʿaṣabiya*). Their fanatical solidarity with one another, he

charges, renders them unreceptive to objective, rational proofs of the truth. Unquestioning loyalty to their group makes them affirm whim and passion over reason. The Christians, on the other hand, Ibn Hazm sees as stupid, irrational, and inferior to adherents of other religions. He is most incensed, however, by the manner in which Christians blindly submit to the authority of their leaders (specifically, their bishops and other hierarchs), whom he considers to be scoundrels who arbitrarily define religious doctrine and practice to suit their needs.

In short, in the *Treatise*, Ibn Hazm uses exegesis as the means of establishing the untrustworthiness of the Jewish and Christian scriptures and of the Jews and Christians themselves. Why does he do this? What is the purpose of the polemical discourse he presents in the *Treatise*?

E. The Purpose: Ibn Hazm's Agenda

Given the fervor with which Ibn Hazm assailed the earlier scriptures and the religions based on them, one might well assume that his purpose was to convince Jews and Christians to embrace Islam. Though Ibn Hazm would doubtlessly have been pleased with such conversions, this was not his primary objective in composing the *Treatise*.

Several factors indicate this. If he were concerned primarily to move Jews and Christians to conversion, he would have addressed his polemic to them. According to his own accounts, he did not hesitate to challenge Jewish and Christian scholars to their faces; it is unlikely, therefore, that he would hesitate to address Jews and Christians directly in his writings. As we argued in Chapter VI, however, his principal audience is not the *dhimmis*, but his fellow Muslims, specifically members of the intellectual elite of al-Andalus; only secondarily are Jews and Christians addressed. The components of the "common ground" on which he based his polemic—Islamic doctrine, Islamic law, common religious sensibilities, and reason—are all proper to a Muslim audience; only the last two could be used as the basis of argumentation aimed at the *dhimmis*.

But why would he address a polemic against Jews and Christians to Muslims? We have argued that he hoped that, by discrediting the *dhimmis* in the eyes of his coreligionists, he would also discredit also those who showed what he considered to be excessive benevolence toward them. In Ibn Hazm's opinion, Jews and Christians had been given far too many privileges in al-Andalus, privileges that were proscribed by the *shari'a*. His fellow Muslims were too positively disposed to them and dealt with them far too intimately. The boundaries between Muslims and non-Muslims stipulated by Islamic

law had become blurred; Ibn Hazm felt that they had to be sharply enforced once again. Through the polemic of the *Treatise* he hoped to establish that any Muslim who befriended the perfidious *dhimmis* was in error and should be opposed. He wanted to encourage a more anti-accommodationist attitude among his coreligionists.

Foremost among those to be challenged were the Berber rulers of the party kingdoms who not only countenanced the presumption of Jews and Christians in their realms but actually assisted them in rising to their "illegal" status in their realms. These rulers were flagrantly violating the laws of Islam and therefore should be overthrown. Out of concern for his own safety, however, Ibn Hazm could not openly attack these Berber rulers; he had to call for political resistance against them in a more circumspect manner. This, we have argued, is what he hoped to accomplish through the *Treatise*: by stirring up indignation against the Jews and Christians (and especially against their leaders), he hoped to inspire his fellow Muslims to rise up against those rulers who supported the *dhimmis* (and their leaders) in an "un-Islamic" manner. According to his political theory, as we noted in Chapter VII, such action was not only permissible but necessary. Some rulers had to be overthrown; they were no longer worthy to rule. The polemic of the *Treatise*, therefore, is an indirect call for nothing less than political action, if not actual rebellion. It is a call for radical societal restructuring, in accord with the requirements of Islamic law. It was time for an Islamic societal order to be re-established.

In short, whatever theological or missionary concerns Ibn Hazm may have had in writing the *Treatise*, they were secondary to his agenda of socio-political reform. To see the *Treatise* merely as a work of abstract theological argumentation, therefore, is to miss its significance. Its polemical exegesis was not meant just to challenge religious convictions; it was meant to re-shape an entire society.

In closing, we should mention two ironies. It is ironic, for example, that Ibn Hazm benefitted from just the type of familiarity with Jews and Christians that he decried. As we argued in Chapters II and VII, it was through contact with Jews and Christians that he accumulated the materials he needed to write his polemic against Jews and Christians! We indicated, for example, that he probably drew on the work of the Karaites and on a Christian translation of the Bible into Arabic. He probably also used anthologies of Jewish texts compiled by Christians for use in their own polemical undertakings against the Jews. Furthermore, his use of classical rhetorical techniques indicates his familiarity with learning of pre-Islamic origin. A more thorough study

of the sources used by Ibn Hazm in composing the *Treatise* is required; it would, in all likelihood, show more extensive contacts between Ibn Hazm and Andalusian *dhimmi*s than we might at first expect.

A second irony is that Ibn Hazm calls for the restructuring of Andalusian society not because it was dysfunctional but because it was functioning *all too well*! That is, even though the societal structures that had developed in al-Andalus may have contradicted the requirements of Islamic law, they nevertheless worked quite well at the grass-roots level in integrating people of differing cultures into a highly cooperative, functional entity. It was precisely the success of these integrative structures that alarmed Ibn Hazm. They blurred the distinctions inherent in the Islamic societal model and therefore had to be actively opposed. Precisely because of their effectiveness in overcoming intercommunal separatism, they had to be vigorously challenged.

This study grew out of the conviction that Ibn Hazm, in developing his detailed arguments against the sacred texts of the Jews and Christians, intended not only to *say* something but to *do* something as well. Thus, while we examined in detail the elements of his argumentation, we also attempted to appreciate the function of the work as a whole in the milieu of eleventh-century Islamic Spain. We have concluded that Ibn Hazm, while engaging in exegetical and theological analysis, was issuing a political call to action. Without denying Ibn Hazm's obvious religious interests, we have come to see the *Treatise* less as an attempt to change the theological convictions of his readers than as an attempt to incite them to restructure the society in which they lived.

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